





A CHIVALROUS DEED,

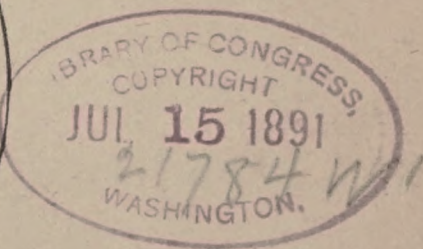
AND

WHAT CAME OF IT.

BY

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A CHIVALROUS DEED,

AND WHAT CAME OF IT.

CHAPTER I.

“Hirty, flirty, girty, goff;
One, two, three, and it comes off,”

THIS sing song was chanted by one of a group of little girls. As she came to the final “off” of the rhyme, she plucked the crown from the shaker bonnet of one of her companions. There were a score of them, all little girls ranging in age from nine to eleven years, and all but one dressed in more serviceable than fashionable style.

They were playing in the yard of a New York school: one of the older-fashioned schools, built before the introduction of steam heat, or adjustable desks.

It was after school hours on a balmy Friday in the latter part of April, and the girls lingered in the yard for their sports with no fear of being disturbed. The fun of trying to pull off each other’s bonnets just as the last word of the rhyme was said, had become wildly boisterous and there had not been a lull in the screaming and the running till this accident of tearing off an entire crown caused a sort of dismayed silence for a moment: then the comical appearance of the bon-

net without a top raised a great shout of laughter. But the wearer of the shaker did not even smile. She was vexed enough to cry, only pride restrained her, and as the merriment increased she tore the ruined bonnet from her head and stamped her foot in childish rage.

Her anger only increased the mirth of her companions. Unable at last to bear it any longer she fled from the yard and up the street to her own home, the whole screaming pack of girls at her heels. On they scampered till the foremost, she whose dress was better than the others, stopping suddenly, said :

“Don’t let us run after her any more, girls. I am sure we have hurt her feelings. It was awful mean of us to laugh at her so.”

“Ain’t you a nice one, Helen Blun, to talk like that, when you’re the very one who tore her hat,” a black eyed, resolute girl responded indignantly. “I guess I’d try to be good myself before I went to making saints of other people.”

“I know I tore Nanny Tavish’s shaker,” Helen replied hotly, “but I didn’t mean to do it, and I’ll get my father to buy her a new one, and I’ll bring it to her Monday.”

“Oh, you will,” said the first speaker sneeringly, “you had better get your father to buy you another bonnet, that one looks as if it had been used by a monkey to collect his pennies.”

As this bonnet was the only shabby part of Helen’s dress, the advice seemed ludicrously proper, and the girls all laughed again.

Before she had time to reply a very stout and angry looking woman bore down upon the party, making directly for the saucy black-eyed girl.

“Is it every afternoon of my life I have to come after you?” she said, putting out her big hand to catch the child, but the latter evaded the grip, and she was some paces down the street before the woman realized her defeat.

“ May I never, but she’s like an eel,” she exclaimed, “ but wait till I get her home, ” shaking her big fist after the child, “ and as sure as her name is Lizzie Morrell, I’ll make her smart. And as for the rest of you, ” turning all at once on the partly dismayed girls, “ I dont know what kind of fathers and mothers you have to be letting you race the streets in this mad fashion after school is out. Get away home now, every one of you. ”

With a dive at one, and then at another, she drove them in all directions, but the more forward ones had got back their courage, and they laughed saucily.

Satisfied however, that she had scattered them, the termagant followed in the direction Lizzie Morrell had taken, still puffing and talking angrily to herself.

CHAPTER II.

LIZZIE Morrell's home was in the most crowded tenement part of the city, and two more tenement houses six stories high were being built in the very block she lived on, while all about were dilapidated dwellings, their opened doorways now filled with groups of unkempt women and dirty children, while the babel of voices was mixed with the shrill scream of boys having a street fight, and the hoarse cries of a couple of vegetable venders.

In the very middle of the block was an undertaker's shop, its wide open doors showing a row of upright coffins facing the street, and a couple of trestles in the centre of the shop. Rare was the time when there was not a coffin on those trestles being prepared for some neighbor. There was one on it now, and Mr. Brush, the undertaker was busy lining it, while his assistant, Oleander Thimig, a large, awkward, light-haired boy of sixteen, sleepily watched him from the doorway.

The fleeing child knew the scenes of the neighborhood only too well, and in order to take the shortest route home she darted through the very middle of the street fight, knocking against one of the combatants, and turning his angry attention from the boy he was fighting with to herself. He tried to catch her, but the end of one of her long braids of hair just touched his fingers, and the next moment he saw her vanish into one of the open doorways.

The house she went into was the best on the block;

its halls and stairways were covered with oilcloth, and every other hall had a hanging lamp, and the halls and stairs were very clean.

Two gossiping women on the door-step looked after the child as she fled past them, and they shook their heads in a very solemn and ominous way.

"She's as wild as an Injun," said one.

"Yes, and as ugly," said the other, "Them black eyes of hers is enough to frighten a-body." How Mrs. Morrell stands her I don't know. If she was my child she wouldn't have them wild tricks in her long."

"Well, you see," replied the first speaker, "she is not Mrs. Morrell's own child, and I suppose Mrs. Morrell puts up with her for that; and then after all she's Mrs. Morrell's husband's own niece."

"That's true enough; but 'spare the rod and spoil the child' is my motto, and if ever a rod ought to be used it ought to be on that little spitfire. She's a terror to the neighborhood. Look at what she did last week, taking a lot of children into Brush's shop when only that fool, Oleander Thimig, was there, and getting them all to measure themselves to the coffin!—if we don't have plenty of deaths this winter my name isn't Sophia Tappan."

"Oh, Mrs. Tappan," said the other woman terrified at the prediction, "you surely do not think anything like that will come out of what the child did just for play?"

"I hope not," answered Mrs. Tappan, "but I know I've always heard tell from the time I was a child that it was a bad thing to measure yourself to a coffin—it was a sure sign of a speedy death in the family, and I'm glad my Katy wasn't with the children in Brush's that day."

"But my Lucy and Ellie were," said the other woman plaintively, "and if anything was to happen to them, or their father—oh, dear! I'll never let them go near Lizzie Morrell again."

Mrs. Tappan smiled with a sort of a grim satisfac-

tion, and then seeing Mrs. Morrell coming she called to her companion to look, saying :

“I bet anything she’s been having a chase after Lizzie. Just look at her ; her face is as red as fire, and she’s puffing and blowing like a porpoise.”

“Did you see my Lizzie?” Mrs. Morrell gasped, as she stopped and wiped her face with her apron.

They both said at once that her Lizzie had fled past them into the house a few moments before.

“I haven’t a breath left in me,” she gasped again, “running after her, and if it wasn’t that she’s me own brother-in-law’s child, I’d put her somewhere where there’s stronger than me to manage her.”

“And you’d be doing right,” said Mrs. Tappan, “she wouldn’t be let to run wild then as she is now.

“Let to run wild ? ” said Mrs. Morrell, her anger turning against Mrs. Tappan for this reflection upon her government of the child, “who says she’s let to run wild? my husband is her own uncle, I’d have you to understand, Mrs. Tappan,” fixing her hands on her broad hips, and putting her flat feet squarely down.

“She’s my niece by marriage, Mrs. Tappan, and nobody that was ever related to me was ever let to run wild, and what’s more, she’s getting an education, a thing that some people don’t give to their own children—” the last words being a slap at Mrs. Tappan, whose daughter two years older than Lizzie Morrell, had not gone to school a day in her life.

Mrs Tappan was made by this remark as angry, as, Mrs. Morrell was.

“You needn’t fling your sneers at me,” she cried, raising her voice, “if I don’t send my Katy to school. Lizzie Morrell needn’t thank you for being sent. It isn’t to you she owes it but to her uncle that makes you send her to school. Didn’t I hear the pair of you scolding about it the other day when your door was open and I was drawing water in the

entry? Didn't your husband say that while he lived Lizzie should get all the education he could give her; that you shouldn't keep her home from school a day, and that he'd have his way in that?"

Mrs. Morrell was overcome: such a mortifying revelation of her private family affairs, was too much for her to answer; she turned shortly into the house saying when she had got behind the threshold:

"That's enough for me; any woman that'll listen to another woman's private conversation isn't fit company for anybody."

Mrs. Tappan, replied by a loud, scornful laugh.

While this was going on Lizzie had ample time to mount two flights of stairs, run through a hall, and dart into a room at the end of it.

Judging by the furniture it was the "best room, but it was in a very dusty and untidy state.

A parrot in an unclean cage was on the marble topped centre-table and a couple of fancy paper cages hung between the cheap lace curtains of the windows. A large heavy middle aged man dressed in bright red flannel was sitting in a great easy chair in the centre of the room. He wore a nightcap of the same red flannel, and altogether he made one think of a giant monkey.

His features were strong and homely, but the expression of his face was honest and kind.

From talking to the parrot he had fallen into a doze, and Lizzie's entrance woke him with a start.

"Is that you, Lizzie?" he asked. "Have you been at it again?" There were tones of gentle regret and reproach in his voice.

"No; I have not been at it again, but she's been after me again," said the child, her eyes looking twice their size in her anger, and her cheeks very red. Her hair combed back from her low, broad forehead was as black as her eyes.

Her complexion was very dark, but lighted by color as it was now, it looked brilliant.

"If she touches me this time, Dad," she went on, "I'll scratch and bite her like a cat."

"Lizzie, you must not talk like that" he said, trying to speak sternly.

"Yes, I shall ; for I am just as mad as fire, Dad."

Dad looking at her, could not doubt her anger, and he dreaded a meeting between her and his wife just then.

"What right has she to come after me nearly every afternoon," the little girl went on, "and make me ashamed before all the girls in my class? I heard Helen Blun ask one of the girls this morning if that feather-bed tied in the middle was coming after me to-day ; and she did come, and she tried to get hold of me, but I ran away. I hate her—hate her—*hate* ! —HATE !!—HATE !!!" the word each time was more prolonged and spoken in a higher key till it became almost a shriek.

Dad said :

"Lizzie ! Lizzie !" his voice so full of distress stopped her at once. " Dont go on that way, and just hide yourself somewhere now, and I'll talk to her. Do ! that's a good child." The girl hesitated, feeling as if she must have some revenge, but her love for her uncle was stronger than her rage.

"Do, Lizzie ! do now ; like a good child," he coaxed again, as he put out his hand to her ; the effort caused a twinge of pain from his rheumatism and as the agony showed itself in his face, Lizzie's wish to have immediate revenge was quite overcome.

She darted to him, flung her arms about his neck, kissed him on both cheeks, and fled to her own room. He heard her locking herself in, and with a sigh of relief he began to talk to the parrot.

"It's human nature, Poll, and human nature has its good as well as its bad, if we'll only have patience."

Poll began to scream in her hoarse voice :

"Mad as fire ! hate you ! hate—hate—hate."

This caused new dismay to the kind-hearted man.

If the parrot was going to tell what Lizzie had said Mrs. Morrell's anger would be greater.

"Hush, Poll !" he commanded, but the bird was too well pleased with her newly found words to heed him ; she strutted about the cage, put her head on one side and seemed to delight in her knowledge that he could not move from his chair to make her stop.

"Mad as fire ! hate her—hate her—" she screamed till Mr. Morrell felt that to choke her would be small satisfaction.

The situation became exasperating ; every moment brought nearer the return of his wife. He heard at length her heavy foot coming up the stair, and the good natured man almost trembled at the sound.

Her anger was not lessened by the words she had had with Mrs. Tappan, and when she came into her husband's presence and did not find the child she grew furious.

"She's been here," she exclaimed, "You needn't tell me, Bartholomew Mortimer Morrell—" whenever she was angry she called her husband by his full name—"and you've sent her to hide ; that's the way that child is set over me in my own house, with my own husband a taking her part, and then I'm told she's let to run wild. I'll tell you what it is, there is going to be only one head in this house, and that's me."

Bartholomew Mortimer did not reply ; perhaps because he was practicing what he so often advised, "patience with human nature."

The parrot was also silent ; she generally was when anybody else was talking.

Mrs. Morrell getting no answer began again :

"I demand, Bartholomew Mortimer Morrell, to know where you sent that child to hide. I am going to punish her for this day's doings—I am going to show the neighbors that I won't let her run wild if *you* do."

Mr. Morrell straightened himself a little ; even that movement, small as it was, gave him pain, but he answered gently :

“ I think, Maria, you’d better let the child alone just now ; she’s gone to her own room and locked herself in ; by and by, when you’re both quieted down we’ll talk things over a bit, and maybe Lizzie ’ll promise to do better.”

The gently spoken words did little good. Mrs. Morrell still felt too keenly what Mrs. Tappan had said, and she answered as angrily as before :

“ There’s been too much talking over of things in this family, Bartholomew Mortimer Morrell ; what’s wanted now is an acting of things, and I’ll have it too.”

With this parting shot the woman wheeled about and went directly to Lizzie’s room.

Mr. Morrell sank back in his chair with new pain and weariness, while the parrot, now that there was silence again, began to strut and talk.

Lizzie’s room was as odd as herself. Two bedrooms were between it and the apartment her uncle occupied during the day. It was not a very small room though it had only one window ; that, however, was large and looked out on the street. The floor was covered with a bright ingrain carpet, and the table was upside down making in this way a sort of box for many little squares of cheap paints, small paint brushes, colored lead pencils and cards for drawing.

This use of the table had made it necessary for one of the chairs to do duty as a table, so, accordingly, a chair was covered with a green woolen cloth, and on the cloth were a number of school books, an ink-stand and a pen.

Almost in the middle of the room was an elderly clothes-horse. This piece of furniture helped to hold up a triangle made of rough boards loosely nailed together. On this triangle rested a drawing not quite

finished, showing that the triangle was meant for an easel. A little bureau with a very tiny looking glass, a neat crib-like bed, and a rack where Lizzie's few dresses hung, made up the rest of the furniture. On the whitewashed wall hung two really fine engravings ; the drawing on the easel was a copy of one of these that Lizzie had been trying to make, and though it was very rude it showed a good deal of talent.

Every penny that Dad gave her, she spent for paints, crayons, and drawing paper, and as often as she could she went to picture-stores to look at pictures in the windows.

Mr. Morrell had no children of his own, and he had not much learning, but he had good common sense, and a very kind heart, and it pleased him to have Lizzie give as much time as she could to this work that she liked so much.

Lizzie was the only child of his only and dearly loved younger brother, who more lucky than Mr. Morrell had received a very good education ; he had even been something of an artist and from him Lizzie inherited her talent. When his death, and a little after, the death of his wife, made her an orphan at the age of six, Mr. Morrell took her for his own child. At that time he kept a large grocery store, and he had saved a good deal of money ; he meant in the future to buy a home, but before he could do so, he was stricken with rheumatism. That caused him to give up the store, and to go to live in his present home, six rooms on the second floor of a tenement house that held twelve other families.

Mrs. Morrell was pleased enough to have her husband take the little orphan, but when she found the child always shrinking from her, and passionately rebelling against her management, it changed her feelings entirely ; and when at the same time Lizzie showed a wild affection for Mr. Morrell and an instant obedience to his gentle wishes, it made her very jealous.

Lizzie having come from fond parents and a home where she never heard any but low-voiced, kind words, and where she never saw anything but gentle manners, could not bear the change to Mrs. Morrell. From the time she was very little she had taken a dislike to her aunt's vulgar appearance ; it was so different from her own little, delicate mother's. And she would not call her uncle's wife anything but Mrs. Morrell, while she had always called Mr. Morrell uncle, changing it to "Dad," at his own wish when she went to live with him.

He and his brother had called his father "Dad," and it seemed to him to be a dearer name for Lizzie, since he was going to be more father to her than uncle.

Mrs. Morrell was not naturally unkind, but she did things on impulse, and she was cursed with a very quick temper. She thought Lizzie should be punished for not liking her, and it never once came into her mind that gentleness would win the child. What troubled her most was that her husband would never let her keep Lizzie home from school to learn to do housework, though how much Lizzie would have learned is doubtful, for Mrs. Morrell's housework was done at very uncertain and irregular times. Her cleaning days were like spasms, causing everything in the house to be so turned and put out of place, it took days to get them into position again.

In those cleaning times Lizzie's room was treated like the others, and it was only the firm command of her uncle that saved her drawing-cards, pencils and paints from an entire sweep into the ash can.

Mrs. Morrell did not yet know that Lizzie had turned the table upside down to make a box for her drawing utensils as it was only the day before she had thought of the plan when she found that the box she had was altogether too small, and she did not want to trouble Dad for another.

The moment she had locked herself in she almost forgot her excitement in the sight of the crude drawing on the easel; she meant it to be a present to Dad, and it was so much larger than anything she had ever tried to draw, that she was proud of it. She got her idea of an easel from a chance sight of one in a picture store where to her breathless delight she had seen an artist; she was sure he was an artist for he was sitting before the easel painting a picture. If she could only do her drawing like that instead of bending over a table, and with the aid of Oleander Thimig she procured this rough easel. Mrs. Morrell had an old clothes-horse in the cellar, and this Lizzie managed to convey privately to her room.

The girls anger subsided as she looked at the drawing; she knew Dad would be pleased, and wouldn't he be surprised at the size and excellence of her work. These happy thoughts were unluckily interrupted by the heavy, well-known footstep, and a loud knock at the door.

"I won't answer her," thought Lizzie, starting away from the easel.

"Let me in" said Mrs. Morrell, her voice trembling with rage, "open the door this minute."

There was no answer; the woman listened but could not hear a sound.

"I know you're in there," shouted Mrs. Morrell, "and if you don't open the door I'll break it in," giving the door a violent shake which threatened to tear it from its hinges.

A bright thought came to Lizzie at this juncture, and there was a faint smile about her mouth as she went to the door and shouted back:

"If you break this door down, I'll put my head out of the window and scream murder."

"Mrs. Morrell paused; if this threat were put in execution it would cause commotion in the neighborhood and there was no telling what dreadful things

Mrs. Tappan might say. So she made up her mind not to try any more just then to conquer Lizzie, and so turned and walked quietly away. Lizzie could hardly believe that her stratagem had succeeded; did she dream of what Mrs. Morrell would do a few hours later, she would rather have been beaten till the blood came.

CHAPTER III.

The little girl with the torn shaker bonnet who had fled from the laughter of her companions, never stopped till she got to her own home. It was also in a poor and crowded part of the city, but the home itself had not been built for a tenement house. It showed that in its carved door, wide steps, and broad lofty entrance hall. But the floor of the hall, was bare and though once a week it was scrubbed, and every day it was swept, it was always dirty.

There was a large niche in the wall near the door ; in other days it might have held a statue, but now it held a camphene lamp which was filled with oil and lit at night by the tenants in weekly turn.

Six families were in the house, and every one of them except an old couple in the back basement, and Mrs. Tavish, the mother of our little Nanny, had three or four children.

The Tavishes lived in a large room at the back of the hall ; it was their kitchen, dining-room, sitting room and bed chamber ; but it had two windows looking out on a large yard with a grass plot in the middle. The carpet was worn thread-bare, and in many places patched with different pieces.

A bureau, a bed, a cooking stove, four wooden chairs, a table covered with a faded green cloth, a wash tub, an ironing board, a clock and a lamp, made up the rest of the furniture. But not a speck of dust could be seen any where, from the black marble mantel-piece where the clock and the lamp stood,

to the open closet where the few dishes and shining pans were kept. Even the stove looked as if it had just been polished, and the coarse white muslin curtains of the windows as if they were fresh from the iron.

The wash tub sat on a stool in the middle of the room, a cloud of steam coming from it, and a middle aged, plain looking woman was bending over it rubbing clothes on a wash board.

The child had dashed into the room and seeing how busy her mother was, had thrown herself sobbing on the bed. Mrs. Tavish at once hurried to the little girl, "Nanny darling, what is the matter?"

The little girl looked up, her face covered with tears; how thankful she was she had such a good kind mother to tell her troubles to, and she sat up on the bed, flung her arms round her mother's neck, and sobbed out the story of the torn shaker.

"You see, mamma," she went on, "I was the only girl who wore a shaker, and if it hadn't been an old shaker that somebody else used to wear before it was given to you for me, the crown wouldn't have come off so easily; and it looked so funny with no crown, and just my hair in that hole, that all the girls laughed and laughed till I thought if I didn't get away from them I'd just die."

And with another sob she hid her face in her mother's bosom.

Mrs. Tavish in hearing the story suffered almost as much as Nanny had done; but how was she to help her daughter's wearing cast-off clothes when she was so very poor? To be sure she almost always made them over before she allowed Nanny to wear them, and this took away a little of the sting.

"You shall wear your Sunday hat to school after this," the mother remarked after a pause.

"May I? oh, you dear, good mamma!"

The little face glowed with delight.

"Then the girls will see that I have as good a hat as any of them," and Nanny kissed her mother with every word.

"I know they used to say things behind my back about that old shaker. They thought it was some old thing somebody gave me."

"Perhaps so, darling ! but we must not be proud, and we ought to be willing not to be dressed as well as other people, when we have not the means of other people."

"Oh, but mamma ! it hurts so to be made fun of," said the child, taking her arms from her mother's neck, and looking very hard into her mother's face, "and I can say my lesson so much better when I know I look as well as the rest of the girls."

"And so you should my darling, look just as well as the other girls every day in the year if I could afford it."

The sadness in the loving tones hurt the child. She threw her arms again round her mother's neck, sobbing :

"I didn't want to make you sad, mamma, and if you like, I'll wear the shaker again ; you can mend it," forgetting that she did not know what had become of the crown.

Mrs. Tavish did not know how much it cost Nanny to say that ; only her love for her mother could make her ever show herself again to her classmates in that horrid bonnet. She said with a sigh :

"No ; you shall never wear it again ; and now, dear, I must go to work again for I have all that washing to do before night."

Nanny slipped from her mother's arms and went to look at her "Sunday hat." It had been bought just a week before — a simple white straw trimmed with bows of pretty blue ribbon. The little girl thought it charming, and she said to herself ?

"Helen Blun won't dare to touch that."

"Nanny," called her mother, "don't you want something to eat ?"

Nanny started : she had been very hungry when she left the class-room, but her trouble had taken all appetite from her. She went to the closet and found a little cold ham thinly sliced, a pitcher half full of milk and in a covered tin box the greater part of a loaf of bread. The dish of ham troubled her ; it held as many slices as it had done that morning after Mrs. Tavish had taken some of them for Nanny's lunch. Of what then had her mother made *her* lunch, for even the loaf of bread was not much smaller.

She cut some of the bread, poured a little of the milk into a cup, but she did not touch the ham though it looked very tempting. She was going to save that for her mother's supper, and she managed to eat her bread and milk so that Mrs. Tavish did not notice she had left the meat.

Nanny did not look at all like her mother ; people seeing them for the first time together, were often surprised to learn that they were mother and daughter, for Nanny had big hazel eyes and very dark curly brown hair, while her mother's eyes were small and light blue, and her mother's hair was straight and fair.

CHAPTER IV.

Helen Blun lived in a handsome house on a broad street. She was ten years old, and she had two sisters and three brothers ; two of her brothers were twins. Her father, a little slender man, kept a large tailor store on Broadway. He had very odd ways, but he called all his odd ways, " discipline."

Helen's mother was a handsome woman who liked to read novels, do fancy work, and visit her neighbors. She had been at boarding school from the time she was a very little girl till she was a young woman but when both her parents died and she had to work for her living, she could do nothing more than learn to make vests ; in that way she came to know Mr. Blun who was just then going into business for himself, and he married her. Then he tried to discipline her, as he called it, by forcing her to carry out every rule he made for the house, but after years of trying, she did as he wanted her to do only before his face ; behind his back she had her own way.

Mr. Blun disciplined his children from their babyhood ; he never whipped them, but for every fault he made them do something disagreeable. Of course his children were very much afraid of him. He was not unkind to his family ; Mrs. Blun had three servants and the table was well kept ; but for dress he gave only enough money to get comfortable clothes for herself and the children ; nothing for the kind of clothes Mrs. Blun would like to have, at least for herself. Sometimes she got them in spite

of her husband, but he did not know that, for she either did not wear them before him, or she made him believe she bought them at a bargain.

His servants and his clerks all knew his discipline but as he paid them well and promptly, they did not mind very much. He disciplined himself very sternly, never gave way to a laugh, always looked solemn, never showed temper, and he was so exact that he was never a moment late to his store, nor never returned to his home one minute before or after his usual time.

Growing up with such influences, it was not to be wondered at that Helen had many faults.

This little girl knew she was pretty for her own mother had told her so, praising to her face, her clear pink and white skin, her large deep blue eyes, and her long curls of golden hair.

Helen would not willingly say anything to hurt the feelings of another, and she felt it very much when her own feelings were hurt, but she did not always have the courage to speak well of what she thought ought to be spoken well of, and she was generally good tempered and agreeable only because it was easier to be so.

She liked to talk of the fine house she lived in, the fine store her father kept, and of her father's riches ; this tendency to boast made some of her classmates dislike her, but most of them were ready enough to be her friends because of her father's wealth and position. Lizzie Morrell was the only one who had ever dared to say just what she thought of Helen Blun, and this, Helen had deeply resented. She was afraid of Lizzie too, for her sharp speeches often made the girls laugh.

From the first time that Lizzie's vulgar looking aunt appeared on the scene, Helen had become possessed of a very powerful weapon. This was the weapon of ridicule. Lizzie was ashamed of this relative and the girl knew it. As Helen walked slowly home after

the attack on Mrs. Morrell, she felt great comfort in thinking of her courage in calling this woman a feather bed tied in the middle ; it was some satisfaction for Lizzie's remark about her shabby hat ; but that thought recalled her promise to buy a new bonnet for Nanny Tavish. She knew when she made the promise how little hope there was of her keeping it; her father never gave her spending money—it was against his discipline—and she was too much afraid of him to ask him for any ; to ask her mother was just as useless, for she was always complaining of her empty purse.

What should she do ? If she did not bring the bonnet to school on Monday, Lizzie Morrell would never stop talking about her. She never considered how Nanny Tavish might feel at being asked to take the bonnet.

She was thankful it was Friday afternoon ; that gave her all the next day to think of some means of keeping her word.

She went into the house by the basement door, closing it with a bang ; she had left the area gate wide open as she had found it. Only Mr. Blun always shut the area gate, and closed doors softly, except when doors were closed in his presence.

On the threshold of the dining-room she met Jane, the waitress, setting the table for the six o'clock dinner.

“Won't you give me a piece of cake with my milk to-day ? ” she said coaxingly.

“ Why, Miss ; you know your father's orders about that,” answered Jane.

“ He said you never were to have more than bread and butter with your milk when you came home from school ; and I think he is right ; cake between meals is not good for children.”

“ But, only this once, Jane ; I've been working awful hard in school, and I ought to have something extra. Don't you think so ? ”

“ Well,” said Jane, “ I won’t take it on myself to give it to you ; I’ll put the basket on the buffet and you can do as you please.”

“ You’re a dear, good Jane,” said Helen, and then, she cut a large slice of cake and began to eat it, sipping at the same time from a glass of milk.

All at once she heard her brothers and sisters coming down the basement stairs.

“ Oh, dear ! ” she said cramming as much cake as she could into her mouth, and putting the rest into her pocket.

They burst upon her just as she was trying to wash down the great mouthful with a large swallow of milk. Without waiting for her to take the glass from her lips they began to pull her dress, and as there were eight year old twin boys, two girls, six and four years, and a toddling boy of two, they made it unpleasantly lively for her. She spilled the milk, and when she felt it trickling down her neck, and making greasy streaks on her dress, she grew angry.

“ Go away from me,” she shouted, but this only made them behave themselves worse than ever. Then she began to slap them right and left. That caused howls from the younger ones and a return of blows from the twins. The noise reached Mrs. Blun who was talking to a visitor in the parlor. She went to the head of the basement stairs and called:

“ What is the matter ? and why doesn’t Jane keep those children quiet ? ”

“ It is not Jane’s place to keep the children quiet,” spoke up Jane with spirit, “ it’s the place of the nurse you have sewing up stairs, and it isn’t down here the children ought to be.”

Mrs. Blun’s face crimsoned. She knew that Jane’s impertinent speech was quite true :

“ Is Helen down there ? ” Mrs. Blun asked again.

The answer came in a chorus. Helen was there. Then followed several charges against her.

"She slapped me awful, mamma!"

"She's as cross as two sticks, mamma!"

"She's a sassy sing, mamma!"

The last speech was from four year old lisping Lulu. Helen angrily denied everything they said.

"Be quiet, all of you," said Mrs. Blun, "and you, Helen, stop teasing the children, and take them up to the nursery."

And Mrs. Blun went back to the parlor without waiting to see if her order would be obeyed, shutting the parlor door to keep out the noise.

Not one of the children wanted to go to the nursery; the more roomy basement floor was much better for play and they began again to pull Helen about. To get away from them she asked them to have a game of tag in the yard.

Away they scampered and they were still engaged in the game when Mrs. Blun's visitor took her leave.

Mrs. Blun went back to the sewing room, looking at her watch as she entered.

"A quarter to five," she exclaimed, "Mr. Blun will be here at half past. It is time for you, Catherine, to go to the children."

"Yes ma'am," replied Catherine, sticking her needle into her work and beginning to fold it up, "and I couldn't do much more for I haven't enough trimming."

"Not enough trimming!" repeated Mrs. Blun.

"No ma'am; I'll want a full yard more."

"And that will cost two dollars—oh dear! I'll have to take some of the money I was saving for that lace."

"If you don't get it right away," said Catherine, "there may not be any of it left."

"That is true," said Mrs. Blun, "but whom shall I send for it? You have to dress those children before Mr. Blun comes in, and there wouldn't be time for me to go. I suppose I shall have to send Helen."

Mrs. Blun called Helen from the yard and gave her

a five dollar bill and a piece of the trimming she was to match. She told her just where to go, cautioned her to hurry so as to get home before her father came, and to be very careful of her change. The store was six blocks away, and quite near it was a milliner's shop. Helen forgot her mother's caution and stopped to look at the gay bonnets in the window. Among them was a pretty shaker, just the size of the one Nanny Tavish had worn; it was marked one dollar.

The girl's heart gave a bound; only a dollar.

How she longed to buy it. What delight to bring it to school and give it to Nanny Tavish right before Lizzie Morrell. She could hardly tear herself away, and when she did, a wicked thought came to her. After she paid for the trimming she would have three dollars change; why could she not say she had lost a dollar?

The temptation was so great it sent the blood into her face, and made her heart beat rapidly; it thumped so hard she thought the people who passed must notice it.

She had never told a lie like that before, and she had never kept anything that belonged to another.

She walked on slowly seeing the shaker all the time, and feeling the temptation grow stronger and stronger. When she reached the store her knees were trembling and she thought the clerk who waited on her read in her face what she was tempted to do. When he gave her the change from the five dollar bill her hand shook so that he could not help noticing it, and he said kindly:

"What is the matter, little girl?"

She answered:

"Nothing," but, how she got out of the store with her parcel and her change she hardly knew. In the street she breathed more freely, and when she came in sight of the bonnet again her courage came back. She went boldly into the store and asked for

the much coveted article putting on the counter one of the three dollar bills she had just received.

The saleswoman wrapped the shaker up neatly in brown paper, looking often at the child as she did so. At another time Helen would have been much pleased with such attention, thinking this interest was caused by her pretty face, but now, she was only frightened. Did the woman divine her wicked secret?

When at last the parcel was in her hand she hurried from the store, and ran with all her might till she was within a block of her home. Then she halted and began to wonder what she should do. How would she have the courage to tell that terrible lie?

How get the parcel to her room without being seen?

She walked more and more slowly trying to think of some plan to save herself, when her name was suddenly called by some one behind her. She started as if she had been struck, and the color all left her face, when she found that it was her father who was returning from his business.

"You have been buying something, Helen," he said, "Is it something for your mother?"

"Yes, papa;" she answered, trembling so she could hardly walk.

She wondered what she should answer if he should ask what she had bought. She could tell him what was in the smaller parcel, but the very thought of the larger one made her perspire.

Mr. Blun was thinking what *he* should say to his wife for having disobeyed his imperative order never to send the children on errands, so he did not speak again to his daughter.

Helen walked by his side, trying to keep the bulky bundle as much as possible out of his sight and she was very thankful when they reached the house without having him say another word to her. She was also glad that he went up to the hall door

letting them both in with his latch key. Once here she fled like a deer to her room.

During the day Helen's brothers and sisters went in and out of her apartment as they wished, and as it was part of Mr. Blun's discipline to have no doors locked in his house, except those leading to the street, Helen did not even have a key to her room.

She could hear the voices of the children clamoring in the nursery above her as she looked for some place to hide her secret. The wardrobe was too narrow, the drawers of her bureau had the same fault, and there was no closet in the room ; the only place she could think of was under the bed, and there she hurriedly put it as she heard her mother calling to know if she had come back. Before she could answer she heard her father say ?

"Yes, Mrs. Blun : I have just let Helen in, and I would like to understand what this indifference to my command means ?"

Then the trembling child heard her parents go into her mother's room and close the door. Every moment she expected to hear herself called, but a half hour passed and there was not a sound.

The dinner bell rang and the little ones followed by Catharine went down to the dining room. They did not seem like the same children now that their father was home.

Helen hastened to wash her face and hands, brush her hair and put on a clean apron, for the smallest carelessness in her appearance always brought some punishment from her father ; but she was still trembling so much that the brush fell from her hands, and trying to tie her apron she pulled one of the strings off and was obliged to stop and pin it on. When she did at length enter the dining room, the whole family was seated, her father looking very stern, her mother very red, and the younger children and the nurse exceedingly frightened. The silence was dreadful, and Helen with her heart in her mouth,

and not daring to look at any body took her place.

When she was seated her father said :

“ You are too late, Helen, have you any excuse ?”

“ No sir ;” she answered in a very low voice, and not daring to look away from the table cloth.

“ Does my daughter mean to tell me that she purposely and deliberately kept the whole family waiting ?”

There was no response.

Mr. Blun having waited a moment, said again :

“ You will take as your punishment the loss of your desert till Monday.”

After that not a word was spoken except to give an order to the servant, and when the meal was ended they all waited in the same dreadful silence for Mr. Blun to show that they might leave the table. This he did by looking about to see that each one was sitting up very straight, then rising and leading the way out.

The fun-loving twins always took this time to relieve their feelings, either by making faces, trying to imitate their father's stern manner ; or slyly kicking and pinching each other. This time Helen's dangling apron string was the temptation. A slight twitch sufficed to pull it off inflicting a deep scratch on one of the little fingers. The pain and the spurting blood caused him to scream.

“ What was that ?” said Mr. Blun, solemnly.

“ Helen had a pin in her apron string,” answered the boy, and when I just pulled it so she'd know it was untied, the pin stuck in my fingers.”

“ A pin in her apron string,” repeated Mr. Blun, with greater severity, “ Is that true, my daughter ?”

Whenever he said my daughter, Helen expected to be punished, but knowing her brother had brought this trouble upon her just from mischief, she summoned up enough courage to say :

“ Walter pulled my apron to tease me, and if the pin stuck him it wasn't my fault.”

But a pin in her apron string was to Mr. Blun's mind a very grave matter, and he said with increasing severity :

"How, my daughter, did you come to have a pin in your apron string?"

"I was in a hurry to get to dinner in time, and the string came off, and I pinned it on," said Helen speaking very fast.

Rapid speaking was also against Mr. Blun's discipline, and he said in the same terrible manner :

"You will please repeat your statement in a loud and distinct voice so that every member of your family may hear and be benefited by the lesson I shall thereafter draw from it."

Helen was red to her ears from shame and anger, but she had to say again what she had already said in a voice so loud that it actually reached to the kitchen where it set the cook and the waitress to laughing. After that the poor girl hung her head feeling more ashamed of her present disgrace than of the wicked thing she had done that afternoon, Mr. Blun said in an awful tone.

"You see, my children, of what terrible things your sister has been guilty to-day : she is late in coming to dinner ; and why is she late ? because she has not that love of order—" and here Mr. Blun darted a severe look at his wife—"which I have striven to implant in her, and which it is my desire to implant in every one of you. Your punishment Helen, shall be to go to bed immediately, and to remain in your room all day to-morrow.

In the solitude of your apartment you will be able to reflect upon the terrible consequences of tardiness and the crime of having pins instead of stitches in your clothes. You may now precede us in your departure."

Helen was so glad to get away she hardly minded the punishment of having to go to bed immediately and having to stay in her room all the next day.

CHAPTER V.

SATURDAY was always the most delightful day of the week to Nanny Tavish. On that day she was free from school, and on that day her mother let her read as much as she chose. She got her supply of books from old Mr. Alcock in the back basement and he seemed to have a great number of fairy tales and stories for young people. Nanny also composed little rhymes and stories, but she was ashamed to let any one see them except her mother. She kept them in an old portfolio in a corner of the room, under a chair on which her books were placed, and when sweeping or dusting, Mrs. Tavish was very careful to put everything back just as she had found it; to her every scrap of paper belonging to Nanny was precious.

On this Saturday morning the sunshine streaming into the room awoke the little girl before her mother called her, and she lay trying to think of a line to rhyme with three other lines she had composed before going to sleep. Her mother up long before, had swept and dusted the room, polished the stove and made a bright fire for her smoothing irons; three of them were heating on the front of the stove, while on the back was an earthen-ware tea-pot. A small table near the window was set for break-fast; the dishes held nothing more than bread and butter, but the clean white cloth, the bread cut in the thinnest slices, and the butter in a glass dish were very inviting.

"I have a surprise for you," said her mother after the morning kiss, "last night after you had gone to sleep a note came from Miss Ingoldsby asking me to bring her clothes to Staten Island. She has gone there to board in a hotel for the summer, and you can come with me this afternoon.

The little girl's heart was full of happiness. The fairy tale she was going to read after breakfast and the trip to Staten Island in the afternoon were beautiful things to anticipate, and she felt as if she were one of the happiest little girls in the world.

Notwithstanding Nanny's love for her mother she did not offer to wash the breakfast dishes, and tidy up the room as she should have done, though she was uncomfortable all the time. Nanny would have resented it had any one told her she was fonder of fairy tales than of her mother. But this little girl with all her affection was sometimes not willing to give up or put off her own pleasure, and this was the case to-day.

Though Mrs. Tavish had hoped to start early that afternoon it was four o'clock by the time she was ready to go. Nanny wore her Sunday hat and in her neat white dress, her mother thought she looked as lovely as a picture, but she did not tell the little girl that. Mrs. Tavish was dressed in black, and she carried a large clothes basket. How Nanny hated that basket for it told every one that her mother was a washerwoman.

When Nanny found their way was taking them through the street Helen Blun lived in, she pulled her mother's arm ;

"Don't go this way, mamma ; take the next street."

"Why, Nanny, this is a much nicer street than the next one, What is the reason you don't want to go this way ?"

"One of the girls in our class lives on this block," said Nanny, speaking as if she did not want to tell the reason.

“And what if she does?” said Mrs. Tavish much surprised, and turning shortly and looking at Nanny.

“Are you ashamed of me?” she went on.

“No; mamma, but I’m ashamed of the basket, and I don’t want Helen Blun to see that you’re a washer-woman.”

Mrs. Tavish sighed, but she turned so as to take the next street, and after a moments silence, she said:

“If Helen Blun did see the basket dear, there would be nothing wrong about it; since your mother is a poor widow, people of sense would only respect her the more for honestly working to support you and herself. No right minded person will look down upon you, Nanny, because your mother washes clothes for a living.”

Nanny said nothing.

When they had walked a half dozen blocks—in those days the lines of street cars were few—a turn brought them near Lizzie Morrell’s home; but Nanny would not mind if Lizzie should see the basket, Lizzie was not rich, nor boastful like Helen.

There seemed to be great excitement in the street; knots of women were talking on the sidewalk, and in the doorways, while the undertaker’s shop held four, or five men talking also. But everybody looked amused, and some were laughing. The only one who seemed solemn, was Oleander Thimig; he leaned against the door post of the shop and looked down at his feet in a very mournful way.

Mrs. Tavish and Nanny wondered at the excitement, and all at once they saw a large, coarse looking woman come out of one of the houses and go toward a group of the women.

“That’s Lizzie Morrell’s aunt,” whispered Nanny pulling her mother’s sleeve.

Mrs. Tavish began to walk slowly so as to have a good look at this strange woman: Helen Blun’s description of her, “a feather bed” was not a bad one,

for her waist was just as broad as her shoulders. Her calico dress was short enough to show her untidy feet, and her hair pretty enough if it had been properly cared for, lay in a loose, tangled coil on her neck. Her light blue eyes looked smaller than they were because her face was so large and fat, but she had a well-shaped pleasant looking mouth filled with strong, even teeth. She rested her hands on her hips and seemed to be as much excited as any of her neighbors. On reaching the group of women she talked so loudly that every word was heard by Nanny and her mother.

"I gave it to her, this time ; she'll never repeat *that* trick while her name is Lizzie Morrell."

"Oh, mamma!" whispered Nanny, "Lizzie has done something, and her aunt has punished her."

Mrs. Tavish began to walk quickly again, and Nanny keeping up with her, felt very thankful that her mother was not like Mrs. Morrell; she was full of pity for Lizzie, and she even felt sorry for having been ashamed of the clothes basket. She had rather a thousand times have her mother a washer-woman, than have her a vulgar woman like Lizzie's aunt, and to make up for her pride, she went round to the side of the basket and said, laying her little fingers on the handle !

"Can't I help you just a little bit to carry it, mamma?"

Mrs. Tavish allowed the child to take one end of the basket for a few moments, understanding well the thankfulness and affection that had prompted the offer.

Nanny could not stop thinking of Lizzie Morrell for a long time. But at last the green hills, the pretty houses, the lawn sloping down to the water's edge, and more than all, the sunset with its golden and purple colors streaming from sky to sea, filled her with delight, and crowded out unpleasant memories.

When they left the boat and took the country

road leading to the hotel the scent from the garden hedges and the early spring flowers made a song in her heart ; she told herself she would put it into words sometime.

The hotel gave her new wonder and admiration ; it seemed to be set amid hedges and flower beds while in front of it was a lawn that sloped to the water. In the broad entrance hall she pulled her mother to stop a minute so that she might look into the elegant parlors ; there was one on each side of the hall, and she never had seen rooms so large and splendid before.

They had to go up a flight of stairs to get to Miss Ingoldsby's suite of rooms, and when Mrs. Tavish knocked at the door of the private parlor, Miss Ingoldsby's maid opened it. In a moment the young lady herself appeared from another room ; she was tall and slight and had big brown eyes, very yellow hair, and a face as white as her snowy cashmere dress.

To Nanny she seemed like a vision, and as she came forward with a smile to greet Mrs. Tavish, Nanny thought she had the face of an angel.

"Is this your little girl, Mrs. Tavish, your own little daughter ?" the lady asked.

"To be sure, Miss," said Mrs. Tavish, setting down her basket, and turning to look at Nanny with pride and delight."

"But she does not look a bit like you," said Miss Ingoldsby.

"No Miss ; she takes after her father."

"Just wait a moment, Mrs. Tavish, I want to call my father to see her."

Mrs. Tavish waited, smiling fondly at Nanny.

Mr. Ingoldsby came back with his daughter : he was very stout, very pompous looking and he seemed very cross ; at all events he took no notice of Mrs. Tavish's courtesy but said at once :

"What do you want with me, Cornelia ?"

"I want you to see this little girl," she answered pleasantly.

"Now Cornelia," he said half angrily. "I hope you are not going to add this child to the children you spend so much time with in the city. Your family have had more than enough of such children."

Miss Ingoldsby laughed.

"Don't be afraid, pa ; I only brought you in to have you see how much she looks like Egbert.

Her eyes, her mouth, the shape of her face," Miss Ingoldsby went on, "are just exactly like Egbert's."

"Nonsense, Cornelia ; you are just full of imagination," but while he spoke the testy old gentleman went toward Nanny. She shrank closer to her mother's side, and that seemed to make him angry.

"Just stand still little girl," he said, "I am not going to hurt you. I only want to show my daughter how silly she is in thinking the child of her washerwoman could look like our Egbert,"

"But pa," said Miss Ingoldsby."

"But daughter," interrupted the old gentlemen, "don't you think this nonsense has gone far enough? Now, I suppose, we shall have this poor woman thinking her child is something extra, because of the foolish things you have been saying ; and as for looking like Egbert, she doesn't a bit—a number of children have eyes and hair the same color as his."

"Yes, the same color," said Cornelia thoughtfully, "but there is more of a likeness to Egbert than the mere color, and I know if Edwin were here he would say so too."

Mrs. Tavish during this conversation had busied herself sorting over the clothes apparently confused and ill at ease.

"You will bring your little girl again," Miss Ingoldsby remarked as her father left the room. "I feel quite an interest in her," and then going to a table where there was a beautiful camelia in a tall slender glass vase, she took the flower and gave it to Nanny with a smile.

"Thank you," said the child in a low tone of delight, and as she turned her eyes full on Miss Ingoldsby's face, the young lady remarked wistfully:

"I wish Edwin were here ; I know he would think as I do."

Nanny was impatient to get out of the house so as to ask her mother all sorts of questions, and as soon as she left the hotel she began :

"Who is Egbert, mamma ?"

"I don't know, dear" said Mrs. Tavish.

"Can't you guess mamma, who he is ?"

"No, dear."

"Well who is Edwin, then ?"

"He is Miss Ingoldsby's brother."

"Have you ever seen him ?"

"Yes."

"Do I look like him ?"

"Not at all ; he looks like his sister."

"Where is he now ?"

"I don't know."

"Has Miss Ingoldsby any more brothers, and has she sisters, mamma, and is her mother here ?"

"I don't know much about the family, dear ; I have been washing for them only a little while. I think Miss Ingoldsby's mother is dead, and that she has no sister ; whether she has more brothers than one, I don't know ; and now, darling, I am a little bit tired of so many questions."

"But, just one more, mamma ; don't you think it is queer that I should look like Egbert, and wouldn't you like to see him ?"

The hand that Nanny held grew cold all at once, and as the child looked up into her mother's face she saw that it was as white as the face of the dead.

"Oh, mamma ! how white you are ; are you sick ?"

"No dear ; but I am very tired ; let us hurry and get home, and then a cup of tea will make me feel better."

Nanny's anxiety about her mother took away for the time all desire to ask more questions, and she walked on quietly ; but, after a little, when Mrs. Tavish seemed better, the little girl could not keep from thinking a great deal about the Ingoldsbys. She was going to put Egbert and the beautiful Miss Ingoldsby into her next little story. It was almost like a story already, that she herself should look like this mysterious Egbert, and that Miss Ingoldsby should have given her that beautiful flower. Its very perfume seemed to bring her new and delightful fancies, and so deeply did they absorb her that she had no more wish to speak.

Mrs. Tavish also was deeply thinking, but it was a very different kind of thought from Nanny's.

When they reached home how poor and even miserable the little place seemed to the child ; it was so different from Miss Ingoldsbys elegant home. It made Nanny sad, and while her mother was getting the supper, Nanny sat and thought how happy Miss Ingoldsby must be ; she was so beautiful, she lived in such a grand house, and then she was related to Egbert, for of course Egbert must be somebody very dear. Miss Ingoldsby had said he was a member of the family ; he must then be her brother, and he must also be young and handsome.

Not that Nanny thought she herself was handsome ; indeed, since she did not have golden hair and a pink and white skin like Helen Blun, she was sure she was not at all good looking, but this unknown Egbert, being a man could be handsome without golden hair.

She was still busy with her dreams when her mother called her to supper. She felt alarmed when she saw how ill and tired and sad her mother looked. What if her mother should die ? The thought almost made her heart stop beating.

What were a thousand Egberts and Miss Ingoldsbys, and all the grand houses in the world, to her

darling mother? her heart was ready to break with remorse, and the first mouthful of her supper seemed to choke her, while her tears trickled into the cup she held to her lips. Her mother saw her crying.

"Nanny," she said, "what is it, darling?"

"Oh, mamma! I have been so wicked; I felt so bad because our house isn't lovely and grand like Miss Ingoldsby's, and then I thought if God should make you die because I was so wicked. Oh, mamma!" getting up and going to her mother's lap.

"God won't take you, if I don't have those wicked thoughts any more, will He?"

"I hope not, my dear," and Mrs. Tavish pressed the little girl to her bosom and kissed her fondly, but while she did so she wondered with a sinking heart, if *they* would take the child from *her*.

CHAPTER VI.

FOR two hours Lizzie Morrell remained locked in her room, but she was working at the picture on the easel, and doing that, she forgot her angry aunt till she was once more made to think of her by hearing Mrs. Morrell's voice just outside the door again. This time, however, the voice was not only less angry, but it was even somewhat kind.

"Come out to your supper, Lizzie," she said "and then you'll have to go for Dad's medicine. The bottle and the money are on the kitchen table."

Mrs. Morrell went immediately away, as if to show the child she did not mean to punish her. But Lizzie did not come forth till she was sure that her aunt had not only gone, but gone out.

Then, without a thought of her supper, though she was very hungry, she rushed in to her uncle's room. He was still in his chair and in the somewhat dim light of the lamp on the mantel his large figure in its bright red bag-like garment looked more like a great boiled lobster than ever.

The parrot had been put in a corner so as to give place on the centre table to Mr. Morrell's supper, and the dishes were still there with their contents untasted. Mr. Morrell nodded and smiled when he saw the child, and as she darted forward to him, he said :

"It's all blown over now, little girl, aint it ? Least-wise, Maria didn't seem so angry before she went

out, and you don't look as if you had any temper now."

"No ; I haint now ; I haint any time, when she lets me alone. But you didn't eat your supper, Dad."

"I didn't feel much like it thinking of your hiding away in your room, and knowing *you* didn't have any. So, I told Maria to leave it there. I thought maybe she'd go out and then when you came in to see me we'd have our supper together."

"You dear, darling Dad !" she said, kissing him, and then she began to arrange the tray ; it held only a little earthenware pot of weak tea, a plate of dry toast, and another plate of raw sliced tomatoes without pepper or vinegar ; both butter and seasoning being forbidden to Mr. Morrell on account of the rheumatism.

The invalid watched Lizzie lovingly as she poured out the tea, cut up his toast, and began to feed him, and she did not think of herself, till he said he would not take another bite unless she brought in her own supper ; then it took three journeys to the kitchen to satisfy him that she had really brought all that was necessary. In her case it was not at all a scanty supper, for beside bread and butter and milk there were cold meat and preserves left for her by Mrs. Morrell. "It's awful nice," she said between the mouthfuls she gave to her uncle, and the mouthfuls she took herself, "eating here just by ourselves. Don't you think so, Dad ?"

Dad nodded, his mouth being too full to speak, but his face looked all the satisfaction the loving heart of the child could wish. And the child was so happy that when the clock struck, showing she must have been nearly an hour with her uncle, it seemed to have been only a few minutes, and she started in dismay.

"Oh, Dad ! I forgot — I'm to go for your medicine."

"Well then, dear, run along now ; it's quite a distance you know. Never mind them," as Lizzie began to gather the dishes so as to take them back to the kitchen.

"Maria 'll be in soon to help me to bed, and I'll tell her that I wouldn't let you wait to do it."

So, Lizzie knowing she would not see her uncle again till the morning, kissed him good night, ran to the kitchen, snatched up the bottle and the money, and then hurried to her own room for her bonnet. It was too dark to find it without a light and she went back for the kitchen lamp, that Mrs. Morrell had lighted before she went out.

In her haste Lizzie forgot to put the lamp back, and she forgot also to shut the door of her room. It remained wide open with the light from the lamp showing full on the easel.

It was a long distance to the apothecary shop where Mr. Morrell's prescriptions were always filled : and to night Lizzie enjoyed the walk more than usual, and she went more slowly. That little talk with her uncle had made her very happy and the bright, balmy evening gave her new delight. She looked up at the stars thinking of the stories Dad sometimes told her in his simple way, of God's care and love for every one, and somehow, almost without knowing it herself, there seemed to go forth from her little heart a sort of silent prayer to be made gentler, kinder, and more patient even with her coarse, quick tempered aunt. Then her thoughts went to the drawing she was making for Dad ; it was nearly finished, and her cheeks glowed and her big black eyes sparkled with delight.

Mrs. Morrell had gone to visit a neighbor, and the gossip was so pleasant that she forgot her husband was waiting for her ; but when she thought of him she started up and went home at once. His quiet and patient attitude touched her at first but when her eyes fell on the double array of dishes she knew that

Lizzie had had her supper with her uncle, and of course they had been talking about her ; and these thoughts kindled the ugly temper again.

Mr. Morrell said gently :

“ Lizzie had her supper in here with me, and I told her as she had so far to go for the medicine, not to mind putting away the dishes.”

“ Of course you told her that, Bartholomew Mortimer Morrell,” answered his wife putting her hands on her hips, “ of course you told her to leave everything for your hard-worked wife to do, of course it isn’t enough that I mustn’t keep her a day from school to help me, but I musn’t even expect her to put a few dishes away, and when I go out to have a few minute’s rest in a neighbor’s house, of course everything must be left for *me* to do when I come back, no matter how tired *I* am.”

“ Now, Maria,” said her husband, don’t go on so ; it is all my fault. Lizzie wanted to put the things away, but I wouldn’t let her. ”

“ Of course it’s all your fault, Bartholomew, Mortimer Morrell, and it’s always *your* fault — if you didn’t take that child’s part the way you do, she’d mind me and have proper respect for me. Look at the way you encourage her in that tomfoolery of making pictures; no wonder she’s growing up the wild, idle spitfire she is.”

“ Maria, Maria ! ” again said her husband, “ that’s the only pleasure the poor little orphan creature has, and it does no one any harm, and if you would only try to be gentler with her, she would be better, I know she would.”

But this only made his wife more angry, and Bartholomew laid his head back in the chair and closed his eyes in order as he used to say so often, to have patience with human nature.

Mrs. Morrell finding he did not answer her began her nightly work of changing the bandages on his limbs ; usually she was tender in her touch but to

night she was rough. She knew she hurt him for she felt him tremble and wince, but he never said a word. If he would only speak, reproach her, scold her, say something, she could bear it better than this gentle, patient silence. At length she stopped her work for a moment and looked up at him ; his eyes were still closed but his face was white and drawn from pain. Her anger fled at once and tears rushed to her eyes but she brushed them away, and after that her touch was so gentle that her husband opened his eyes in surprise and looked at her; but he still thought it better to say nothing, till she had helped him to his bedroom ; then, while his hand yet rested on her shoulder, he bent his head, and said as he kissed her :

“ Good night, Maria, my dear ! ”

The loving tones seemed to stay with her after he had gone to bed, and she moved about the room more quietly than usual.

On her way to the kitchen, Mrs. Morrell passed Lizzie's room, the door wide open and everything plainly seen in the bright light of the large kitchen lamp. She stopped in sudden angry surprise ; it took but an instant to change her gentleness to anger.

“ To carry the lamp to her own room and to leave it lighted like that ” she said to herself, “ as if we were millionaires to be wasting oil in that way. ”

The excited woman put the tray down just where she stood, and went straight into Lizzie's room, seeing the very first thing, the table upside down. That made her so angry she did not at first know what to do, then she gave it a kick that sent the pencils, paints and drawing cards in all directions. The next thing in her way was the easel, and when she found it was held up by her old clothes horse, her blood boiled in her veins. It made no difference that she herself no longer used the clothes horse. With one blow she threw it down and picking up the nearly finished sketch she tore it into scraps. Then

she dragged the clothes horse out of the room.

"I'll teach her," she said to herself, "to take things that don't belong to her, and to turn tables upside down. But it's no wonder, the way Bartholomew lets her spend her time—well, I've given her drawing enough for one while."

She took up the lamp and went back to the kitchen, but the moon had risen, and it was shining through the window showing plainly the ruin Mrs. Morrell had wrought.

When Lizzie returned her aunt was nowhere to be seen and she was glad of it. The door of her own room was wide open as she had left it, and the moonlight was showing everything almost as plainly as if it were the middle of the day; the broken easel, the torn sketch, the scattered paints and pencils and cards—Lizzie saw them all. Too well she understood what had taken place, and her blood seemed to get like fire in her veins. Her first thought was to rush to her aunt, and take as much revenge as she could do with her hands and teeth, and she even turned toward her uncle's room feeling sure Mrs. Morrell was there, but the thought of her uncle stopped her; she knew how distressed he would be, and she turned back. But her heart was bursting, and waiting only to shut the door she flung herself with a low cry on the floor beside the scraps of the sketch.

All the fond work of weeks was gone; the one little pleasure that filled her whole life was ruined by this heartless woman. How she hated her; how glad she would be to see her dead, and then with a sort of savage joy she began to picture Mrs. Morrell lying in her coffin.

At length, having cried till no more tears would come, and getting tired of lying with her face to the floor, she turned on her side resting her head on her hand. That brought her opposite a very bright star which shone brilliantly through the open window.

It seemed to her like the eye of one of the angels

Dad had told her about ; perhaps the angel was looking at her in sorrow for her wicked feelings. She knew it was very wrong to wish Mrs. Morrell would die, but how could she help it, when Mrs. Morrell was so cruel.

At length, she fell asleep, her cheeks as red as though they were painted, and her long black eye-lashes shining from the tears that still rested upon them.

Mrs. Morrell was in her husband's room having gone there to tell him what she had done in Lizzie's room, but finding him asleep, she began to gather up and fold the bandages he had worn during the day. Thus at work, she did not hear Lizzie come in, and when two hours after she went to lock the kitchen door for the night, she wondered at not having seen nor heard the child, and to be certain that she had come in she went to the little girl's room.

Trying the door and finding it unlocked she entered. She was touched at the sight of the little creature lying asleep in the midst of the scattered remnants of her beloved work, and for the first time perhaps, Mrs. Morrell felt how precious that work was to the heart of the child.

"I wish I hadn't done it," she said to herself, "but it's too late now," and she stood looking down at the sleeping figure.

"She oughtn't to be left there," she went on to herself, "it's bad for her to be on the floor that way, but if I stir her she'll wake and go at me like a cat, maybe ; and if I shut the window that'll wake her. I'll just cover her from the night air."

Not finding any garment of Lizzie's at hand, she brought her own shawl, and put it carefully over the little girl. Then she went out closing the door of the room very softly.

Lizzie awoke from her sleep in the early morning when nobody seemed to be up but the milkman with his noisy cry, and the rag-picker poking in the garbage barrel.

Her youth and health had made her sleep well enough on the hard floor but neither her youth nor health could banish the grief and anger running riot in her heart ; she felt it as soon as she opened her eyes, and knowing at once whose shawl it was that covered her, she flung it off ; then she kicked it outside the door where it lay in an ignominious heap. She felt so miserable and so wicked, but instead of trying not to give way to her bad thoughts, she yielded to them more and more. She went over to the open window but the beautiful morning did not make her feel any better ; she must do something to Mrs. Morrell for all Mrs. Morrell had done to her. She had a full view of the undertaker's shop from where she stood ; she could see hanging outside of the door the piece of slate where orders were written when there was no one in the shop to take them ; her keen sight even could discern the stub of a pencil tied by a dirty cord to the slate.

Seeing all that put into her mind something very wicked ; so wicked that at first she put the thought away with horror ; but it came back and it brought with it so many other thoughts to make it seem right that she gave way to it. Without waiting to put on her hat she went out softly through the kitchen unlocking the door so quietly that not a sound was heard. On she went to the undertaker's shop, meeting only a few laborers going to work, and when she reached the slate—she could hold it easily by standing on tiptoe—she looked about to see if any one were in sight.

Lizzie's writing could be easily read but her spelling always gave her trouble, and just now she was in such a hurry she could not stop to think about it. This is what she wrote :

“Mister Brush send a coffin for Mrs. Morrell if you don't send it soon she wil smel orful.”

Then she turned away and ran as fast as she could till she had put two full blocks between her and the

order she had left. Of course, when that order was read Mr. Brush would send the coffin, and what would Mrs. Morrell, and even Dad do to her. She wished she hadn't written it, and at length she made up her mind to go back and rub it out, but she had taken so long to decide, that when she got in sight again of the undertaker's shop, it was open and both Thimig and Mr. Brush were there.

Her heart failed her ; she could not let them know that she was the author of this mischief, and so she ran away again. She was getting very hungry and she began to think longingly of her breakfast of oatmeal porridge and milk with plenty of good bread and butter : the very thought of it made her mouth water, but she walked on further and further away from home, her barehead not causing any notice ; it was Saturday and there were in that crowded neighborhood a good many other bare-headed little girls.

She could not bring herself to go further than a few blocks from home for that would seem to be so far from Dad, and the more tired and hungry she grew the more her poor little sad heart longed for her uncle. She thought that even he by this time must have found out what she had done and that he must be very angry with her. How could she ever go home and meet him ? No ; she would never go home ; she would just stay out in the street till she died. She felt so bad and so hungry now, that she thought she would die soon, any way and then Dad would forgive her, and even Mrs. Morrell, maybe when she saw her lying dead would feel sorry for the way she had treated her. She wondered if anybody were looking for her now ; she hoped not for she wanted to be found dead.

She was passing a fruit stand just then, and the woman who kept it seemed to be taking her breakfast ; she was eating a big slice of bread and butter, and drinking coffee from a can. The odor of the cof-

fee made Lizzie cast a longing look toward the stand, a look that told of the child's hunger to the kind-hearted woman and she said :

"Stop, Sissy !" in such a kind way that Lizzie turned back.

" You look as if you hadn't had any breakfast," the woman went on, " will you have a bit of mine ? I have more hot, coffee here than I want to drink, but I haven't anything to pour it into—if you don't mind drinking out of the can."

There was such true kindness in the voice it made a lump come into Lizzie's throat, and she had to shut her teeth hard so as to swallow the lump, and also to keep her tears back, but for all that her lip trembled as she said :

" I didn't have any breakfast, and I don't mind drinking out of the can if you can spare it, and when I get money I'll come and pay you for it."

"No, darling : you musn't think of that. I'm glad enough to have it here to give you."

She pressed upon Lizzie a big slice of bread and butter to eat with the coffee, and she did not ask a single question.

She saw there was trouble in the child's face and she felt it were better to win the child's confidence first ; then perhaps, she would of her own accord tell her story.

But Lizzie feeling much better after she had taken the bread and coffee had less wish than ever to tell anything about herself, and when she had again spoken her thanks, she was turning away without saying anything more, but the woman stopped her to press an apple into her hand. Lizzie put it back.

" I can't take it," she said, "when I've no money to pay for it and when I don't need it. I took the bread and coffee because I was very hungry, and I'll try to pay you for them some day. Good bye."

She was off and partly down the street before the woman could make up her mind what to say.

Lizzie began to be sorry she had taken the bread and coffee, for they made her feel so much stronger she was sure she would not die.

She sat down on the curb of the sidewalk with some little children whose bare legs hung over the dry gutter, and she tried to think what she should do.

At length she grew tired of sitting on the curbstone and she thought she would just go in sight of the undertaker's shop, and find out what was going on. She might be able to do that without having anybody tell her aunt; so she got up, and went on slowly looking carefully on every side.

There was no one anywhere near the coffin shop and Lizzie seeing that, grew bold enough to go up to the very door. She saw at a glance there was nobody inside, and that a very large coffin rested on the trestles; in another moment she saw why there was nobody on the sidewalk near the shop; everybody had been drawn by some excitement down the street.

A great crowd was in front of Lizzie's house, and right before the door she saw the undertaker's large open wagon with the big ice box which she knew so well.

Fear and horror kept her standing as if she were fastened to the spot, but no one was near enough to notice her.

All at once the crowd parted as if in some alarm, and Lizzie saw coming toward her Mrs. Morrell and Oleander Thimig. Mrs. Morrell was holding him by the collar, and a more frightened creature never was seen. His hands were clasped piteously, his knees were drawn up, and the woman was actually dragging him with but a chance touch of his feet to the sidewalk. That sight broke the spell which bound the little girl, and she turned and darted into the deserted coffin shop, feeling if she tried to flee further, she would be caught and killed. But where in the

shop should she hide ? There was a closet but it was locked ; and as she heard the terrible sounds coming nearer, she grew desperate. If she went under the trestles that held the coffin, she would be found at once ; the only thing she could do was to get into a coffin that was flat on the floor and close to the wall.

The upper part of the cover being off, she could get through that opening and push herself down till she was quite hidden. She did so, finding her quarters very close, but she had space enough to breathe, and she was so thankful to escape any where from her aunt that she would have gone into the grave itself : then also, she had played so often in the undertaker's shop that she had no fear of this strange hiding place.

Lizzie's order for a coffin for her aunt had succeeded but too well. Thimig reading it first and glad of the chance to show his employer how promptly he attended to business began preparations without waiting for Mr. Brush to get to the shop.

"She must have died awful sudden," he said to himself, as he went into the cellar to get the tubs for the ice, "for I seen her yesterday. That order's in Lizzie's writing I know. I wonder what she died of. It'll be good for Mr. Brush, though, for maybe it'll take that big coffin off his hands that was ordered day before yesterday for Mr. Farrish, but his wife changed her mind and got a casket. I wonder if they'll have satin trimmings, and who Mr. Morrell 'll get to keep house for him ; he's got the rheumatiz so bad, he'll want somebody more than Lizzie."

And thus talking to himself he went on with his preparations for the living woman's burial ; when he had done all he could do without help he became impatient for Mr. Brush to come.

"It'll be just like him to be late to-day and Mr. Morrell'll think I didn't tell about the order in time."

Mr. Brush did get to the shop so late it almost justified poor Thimig's complaint ; then, to add to

his annoyance there was more delay in getting the ice, so that by the time the undertaker's wagon was ready to be driven to the house of the supposed corpse, Mr. Brush driving, and Thimig sitting beside him, it was two hours after the order had been left.

Mrs. Morrell had found her shawl in the heap outside of Lizzie's door, and she knew from that how angry the child must have been. This made her so furious that when the breakfast was ready she would not call the child. "I'll let her stay in there till she starves if she wants to," she said to herself, "but I guess when she gets hungry enough she'll come out."

Yet, for all her anger she did not put away the dishes placed for Lizzie's breakfast, and even kept the oatmeal porridge on the stove to have it warm for her.

When Mr. Morrell asked for his niece his wife muttered that Lizzie was busy in her own room; he thought it strange but he did not say anything, and when the hours wore on, Mrs. Morrell thought it strange too, and she realized that she ought to go to the child's room. But this idea was very distasteful, and she tried to stifle the feeling by busying herself about her husband a great deal more than usual.

Mr. Morrell was sitting in his wonted spot and looking as queer as ever in his red garments. The parrot also occupied its wonted place on the centre table, and it seemed very happy as it strutted and held its head to one side.

Perhaps one reason of its happiness was that Mrs. Morrell had scoured its cage; the scouring was a sure sign that her spasm of house cleaning was coming on.

All at once there was the sound of something very heavy being dragged along the passage; it made Mr. Morrell look up in surprise and Mrs. Morrell stopped short in her walk across the room. The heavy thing

stopped at the door and then a loud knock was heard. Mrs. Morrell opened the door. There stood Oleander Thimig and at his feet an undertaker's tub filled with ice and behind him Mr. Brush and another man carrying the large ice box for the dead, while still further in the rear was a small army of women and children all drawn by the sight of the undertaker's wagon and all more or less wonderstricken and shocked at their neighbor's sudden death, for Thimig, being questioned had told every body the sad news.

On seeing now in life and health the woman he had come to get ready for burial, Thimig lost all control of himself. His eyes bulged from his head, his very hair seemed to stand on end, and he sputtered between his chattering teeth. "We've brought the ice box for you Mrs. Morrell, and your coffin's getting ready in the shop." For a moment the infuriated woman was unable to speak; she even doubted what she saw, but the ghastly articles in front of her together with the crowd now pressing from the stairway into the very passage, did not let her doubt long, and Thimig in his stupidity not thinking to say a word of the order, it flashed upon her that this was some joke of Thimig's own. She caught him by the collar.

"I'am dead, am I?" she screamed, "well I'll show you, you undertaking wretch, that I have life enough left to give you what you deserve."

Thimig was so frightened he could do nothing but scream, but his screams further than bringing the whole house out into the passages, and on the stairways were of little avail. His antagonist was so much larger and stronger than he, that she lifted him as if he were a feather, and she dragged him shrieking and begging for mercy along the passage and down the stairs. Everybody fled before her; even the men with the ice box almost broke their legs climbing over it in their haste to get out of her way.

This was the cause of the crowd Lizzie had seen, and she was barely safe in her hiding place when

Thimig, still held by her aunt and followed by a crowd that reached to the other side of the street, was jerked violently into the shop.

Lizzie trembled and hardly dared to breathe, but her terror was nothing to the terror of the unfortunate boy ; he had used up his power to scream and his face was so white and drawn from fear that he himself did not seem very unlike a corpse.

“ Is this the coffin you’re getting ready for me ? ” asked Mrs. Morrell, pausing as she reached the coffin on the trestles, but he could not answer her.

“ Speak ! ” she said, giving him a shake. He nodded.

“ Well, then, you’ll go into it yourself,” and lifting him, she crammed him head first into the ghastly thing. She might have done more only for Mr. Brush ; he had forced his way through the crowd and had come to rescue Thimig, for, though he could not help laughing heartily at the humor of it all he pitied poor Thimig, and he said sharply to Mrs. Morrell that she had better punish whoever had written the order for her coffin ; then he showed her the slate. Too angry for anybody to try to quiet her the panting virago dropped Thimig, and turned to go home, some of the crowd following her, and others still waiting in and around the undertaker’s shop.

Thimig though he no longer felt Mrs. Morrell’s hands upon him, was still too frightened to lift his head from the inside of the coffin, till Mr. Brush, again laughing heartily told him more than once that his enemy had departed. Then he looked up and said :

“ Oh, Lor ! I thought she had killed me.”

That speech and his pale, frightened face, caused a burst of laughter from everybody in the shop and the laughter broke out again when somebody remarked :

“ That was a pretty lively corpse.”

Poor little cramped Lizzie ! she heard the talk and the laughter, but she was too much afraid of what might happen to herself even to smile ; she shut her eyes tight and wished that she might die just where she was. To make her presence known would be to give herself into the hands of her aunt, for of course, Thimig would want satisfaction, and Mr. Brush, and everybody else would think she ought to be punished for what she had done.

She knew she had been very wicked ; she had told a terrible lie, she had made her aunt very angry, and she had caused poor Thimig to be punished without deserving it. What would God say to her if she should actually die ? She tried to comfort herself by thinking that God knew all about how dreadful Mrs. Morrell had acted to her, and by calling to mind how her uncle had told her that God loved little children.

The closeness and heat of her hiding place made her drowsy, so drowsy that at length, in spite of her thoughts she fell fast asleep.

Mr. Morrell could not move from his chair to find out the cause of the excitement, but his door had been left wide open, and two women went in without being invited and told him what Thimig had told them. He was at once convinced that Lizzie was at the bottom of the mischief. He felt however that his wife must have done some new act of unkindness to the child, and when she came back after her punishment of Thimig he could hardly wait for her burst of anger to spend itself before he said :

“Maria, what did you do to Lizzie to make her do this to you ?”

“What did I do to her ? what I ought to have done long ago ; tore up her nasty old drawings. When I went into her room and found the way she kept things, the very table upside down, and my clothes horse out of the cellar without as much as asking my leave, I thought it was time to do something.”

"I knew you must have been very unkind Maria," Mr. Morrell answered trying to speak quietly, "and that was the very cruelest thing you could have done. Those pictures she makes are like the apple of her eye, I told you sometime ago not to touch them."

"Now, look here, Bartholomew Mortimer Morrell, if I can't touch things in my own house, you had better get somebody else to do your housekeeping. I'm not going to stand this nonsense any longer. I'm going to be boss ; and don't you forget it ; and I'm going this minute to look for that little wretch. She is hiding somewhere, and when I find her if you try to hinder me from giving her as good a whipping as ever she got, you'll repent it in sackcloth and ashes."

Her husband in too much pain to speak to her again, closed his eyes and was silent. He felt that no matter what his wife had done it could not excuse Lizzie, and he meant to tell the child so, but the thought of having his wife's cruel hands upon her made him tremble.

The parrot with his head on one side had been listening intently to the talk of Mrs. Morrell's visitors ; one of them had said :

"I was that shocked, Mr. Morrell, I didn't know where I was standing, when Thimig told me your old woman was dead."

And the parrot began :

"Old woman's dead ! old woman's dead," But Mrs. Morrell having gone to look for Lizzie, was out of sound of the bird.

Finding that the child had not taken her bonnet, she thought she must be hiding somewhere in the neighborhood, and down she went to the street again, walking up and down, asking everybody, and getting the children to help in the search, but as no one thought of looking into a coffin for the child, she was not found, and Mrs. Morrell had to give up the search and go home. Her husband began to feel

very anxious, and to fear something had happened to Lizzie, but when he said so, his wife laughed at him.

“Is it the like of her that would think of sending the undertaker for a live woman to have anything happen to her,” she said. “Don’t be such a fool, Bartholomew.”

“No matter what she’s done, or where she is,” answered Bartholomew sadly, “she must be half dead with hunger by this time, if nothing else.”

“Well, she ought to be,” said his wife, “she didn’t mind sending the undertaker’s box for me.”

That thought closed Mrs. Morrell’s heart to every kind feeling for Lizzie.

“Old woman’s dead,” began the parrot again. “You lying beast,” said Mrs. Morrell, as angry as though the bird were a human being, and she struck the cage with her clinched fist. “I’ll show you I’m not dead.”

The blow shook the cage and made the parrot flutter; then it put its head on one side and said:

“O-o-o-h! kill Poll! mad as fire—hate you! hate you!”

“You won’t hate me long then; for if I get at you I’ll wring your neck, you backbiting little beast!” Mrs. Morrell thought birds were two legged beasts.

She raised her hand to strike the cage again, but her husband called her name so sternly, he who always spoke so kindly, that she did not have the courage to strike, and she flounced into another room.

Lizzie did not wake from her sleep till late in the afternoon, and there was no one in the shop but Thimig, who was working at a coffin that had taken the place of the large coffin on the trestles. Mr. Brush, as he often did, when business was not brisk, had gone over the way to play dominoes with a couple of friends.

Poor Thimig was hardly himself; He could not

seem to get over the shock Mrs. Morrell had given him, and his hands shook so at his work that he was hardly able to go on. The very stillness of the shop had an awe in it he never had felt before, and when Lizzie waking up drew a heavy breath, Thimig dropped the scissors he had been scalloping the lining of the coffin with, and jumped a foot from the floor.

The sounds brought the child still more to herself, and she tried as quietly as she could to push herself up to the opening through which she had entered. But it was not so easy. Her muscles strained and cramped from their unusual position would not move at first, and much as she had been willing before she went to sleep to die just where she was, now that it seemed likely to happen there, she was frightened and her terror made her struggle wildly to get out.

Thimig's hair began to stand on end, his teeth chattered and his knees trembled so that they knocked against each other. He wanted to run out of the shop but he did not seem to have the power to move, till Lizzie, growing more frightened as she found herself unable to get out, screamed. That gave Thimig power to run, and he shot out of the shop and over the way to Mr. Brush, startling that gentleman and his companions by his looks before he said a word.

"Is it another live corpse, Thimig?" one of them asked, as they all waited for the terrified boy to get breath enough to articulate.

"It's something in one of the coffins," he said ;
"Come quick."

"A rat," put in the other man.

Thimig shook his head.

"I knows rats when I hears'em, and them noises I heerd just now, wasn't no rats."

But Mr. Brush was already hurrying across the street, leaving the men and Thimig to follow.

Sure enough, there were noises in one of the coffin's, and the half smothered and terrified voice of a child crying frantically :

“Take me out ! take me out ! oh, somebody take me out !”

Startled and amazed, Mr. Brush went to the coffin, and in a moment his strong hand wrenched off the cover that had helped to confine poor little Lizzie.

Perspiration, tears, and the dust of her close, narrow bed had made her a pitiable, and at the same time a very laughable sight, and all the man could say as he lifted her out, was :

“How in thunder, did you get in there ?”

“I went in myself because I didn’t want Mrs. Morrell to find me,” she answered through her tears, and by that time the shop was filling again with curious people. And when it was known that the luckless Thimig had been frightened again by a member of the Morrell family, and in such a ridiculous way, the block was once more the scene of laughable excitement.

In this way Mrs. Morrell was not long in hearing that Lizzie had been found ; neither was it long till she herself was in the coffin shop with her strong, cruel hand clutching Lizzie’s arm.

Everybody felt sorry for the child ; indeed, her appearance would have brought compassion from the stoniest heart ; but Mrs. Morrell was too angry at having been laughed at so much to listen to a word in favor of Lizzie.

“I wouldn’t be too hard on her, Mrs. Morrell,” said Mr. Brush, “she’s only a child, and I think she suffered enough penned up in that narrow, dusty coffin.”

But Mrs. Morrell turned on him in a way that made him back a little.

“If you please, sir, she’s my niece by marriage, and I have a right to punish her when I think fit ; and it’s high time I showed a good many people about here, that I’m not dead yet.”

Nobody after that dared to raise a voice in behalf of Lizzie, and Mrs. Morrell took her home, never for an instant loosening her tight hold of the child’s arm

Poor little creature ! weak, frightened, and more heart broken at the thought of how angry Dad must be with her than even at the thought of the whipping she was about to receive, every spark of spirit seemed to have gone from her. She did not even try to pull away from Mrs. Morrell's clutch as she would have done at another time ; she was so utterly broken that she hardly felt it.

Mrs. Morrell took care to go in by the kitchen door so that her husband should not see Lizzie, and in the kitchen she inflicted chastisement. Once before she had struck the child with the strap used on this occasion but never before had she given such cruel blows. Lizzie tried not to cry out but the pain was too great and she shrieked at last in utter abandonment and despair. Mr. Morrell heard the scream and knew what caused it ; he writhed in his chair till the pain he himself felt from the movement was almost as great as the pain of his niece, and when his wife having satisfied herself went to tell her satisfaction to him he said only :

“Now *you* have punished her, send her to me.”

It was the same tone he had used in calling her name when she was going to strike the parrot's cage, and now that her temper cooled somewhat, it made her both frightened and sorry, and she went without a word to tell Lizzie.

Lizzie was lying on the kitchen floor just where she had sunk when the last blow had left her crushed, sore and humiliated, for such a whipping was the keenest insult to her sensitive nature. Never did more intense hatred burn in a human heart than in Lizzie's at this moment, and when she heard Mrs. Morrell's voice, saying :

“Lizzie, your uncle wants you,” she felt, if she had strength enough, that she would have flung herself upon the woman, and have torn her as a wild cat might have done ; but she only dragged herself up and went to her uncle.

Of course he was going to scold her ; he never did more than that, but this time she was sure he would scold her severely. She tried to prepare herself for it with a sort of defiance, but when she reached him and saw his look of love and pity, and when she saw him try to put out his poor bandaged arms to show her that he wanted her close to his heart, all her pride, her defiance, her hatred vanished in a flash.

She sprang to him, nestling on his breast, and he said in a trembling voice :

“My poor little famished darling ; you did not mean to do the wrong thing you did to day, I know.”

“No, Dad, I didn’t ; I didn’t think it would turn out that way.”

He held her to him as well as he could, but he did not speak again till she grew calm. Then he tried to show her in his simple way the wrong she had done, to soften her bitter feelings to his wife, and to win from her a promise of doing better.

While uncle and niece were having this talk, Mrs. Morrell had gone to the street again to tell the neighbors she had punished Lizzie, and it was at that time Nanny Tavish and her mother passing by had seen a little of the excitement.

CHAPTER VII.

HELEN BLUN glad to get away from the scolding of her father and the teasing of her brothers, did not take long to undress herself and get into bed. First, however, she peeped under the bed to be sure that the shaker was safe, and as she drew the sheet partly over her face to keep it from the glare of a street lamp opposite, she felt very glad that she would not have to meet her mother till the morning. That gave her some hours to get courage for the lie she was going to tell. But, contrary to her expectations, just as she had turned for the fourth time in her impatience to go to sleep, the door opened and her mother came in.

The light from the gas lamp showed her plainly as she crossed to the bed.

"Are you asleep, Helen?" she asked sharply, pulling the sheet somewhat roughly from the girl's face.

Helen's heart gave a bound into her throat, and that kept her answer back for a moment.

Her mother asked again if she were asleep, at the same time shaking her shoulder.

"No," was the gasping reply.

"What did you do with the trimming and the change?"

"They're on the table over there." Mrs. Blun crossed to the table, a small one placed between the windows. She unwrapped enough of the little parcel to be sure

that Helen had made no mistake in the trimming ; then she took up the two bills that were folded one within the other.

"Where is the other dollar ?" she asked, anger and dismay in her voice.

"I lost it," came in half smothered tones from the bed.

"You lost it," said Mrs. Blun, going back to Helen and catching her by the shoulder, "You bad careless girl, I hate the sight of you," she said. This remark was accompanied by a stinging slap on the child's cheek.

"Didn't I tell you to be careful of the change ? why didn't you mind me ?"

But Helen had managed to cover her whole face with both sheet and quilt.

"You are a perfect torment," Mrs. Blun went on, "and you deserve the best whipping you ever had. I declare I don't know what I couldn't do to you for losing that money. How did you lose it ?"

"I don't know," from under the bed clothes.

"Are you sure you got your right change ?"

"Yes, I'm sure ;" in the same half stifled voice."

"Did you put the money on that table when you came in, and has it been there ever since ?"

"Yes."

"Have those children been in here to touch it ?"

"No ; I didn't have the right change when I came into the house."

Though Helen was willing to tell a lie about the change, she could not bring herself to tell a lie that would make some one else appear guilty.

"Oh, dear ! what *shall* I do ? that takes three dollars out of the amount I was saving for some lace. I am so vexed I'd just like to punish you severely."

And Mrs. Blun did punish her severely, by violently pulling the clothes from her face, and giving her three, or four such hard slaps that the little girl cried out from the pain.

Helen sobbed for a little while ; then she turned her back to the glare of the street lamp and tried once more to sleep. She was glad that her lie had brought nothing worse and that so far, the shaker bonnet was safe ; but, mixed with her gladness were feelings of shame and guilt. All that she had ever heard of the terrible sin of lying came back to her now bringing a fear that made her shudder, and she was glad to turn again to the lamp, for the light seemed to take away some of the shadows caused by her own guilty dread. When she did go to sleep she dreamed that her father had found out what she did and to punish her had ordered her to be smothered with shaker bonnets. Hundreds of shaker bonnets fell on her, and unseen hands pressed them on her mouth and nose till the feeling of suffocation actually awoke her.

Then she was astonished to find it broad daylight, for as she called to mind all that had taken place the evening before, it seemed to be only a moment since she had been lying unable to go to sleep ; but the sunshine of the lovely morning was flooding the room, and everything looked so bright, Helen herself felt a lightness of spirit that made her almost forget the fear and shame she had gone to sleep with.

The bell that called every member of the Blun family, even the two year old boy, from his or her bed at precisely six o'clock, was ringing through the house, and Helen, knowing that the breakfast bell would also ring in a half hour sprang up to dress herself ; then she remembered she was to keep her room all day, so it made little difference whether she made her toilet, or went back to bed, but, as she did not feel sleepy she thought she would dress herself.

When she was dressed she took another look at the parcel under the bed to be sure no one had stolen it during the night ; then she seated herself by the window to look at the sights on the street.

In a little while she heard the breakfast bell, and just as soon as it had stopped ringing, she heard her

little brothers and sisters troop forth from the room above her.

Helen wondered how long she would have to wait for her breakfast. It seemed a long time for Jane did not bring it up till Mr. Blun had gone to business.

"Your father told me Miss, to remind you of his order not to leave your room all day," the servant remarked.

Helen at once began to eat ; and Jane to make the bed. In the turning of the mattress she spied the brown paper parcel.

"Whatever that is," she said, putting the parcel on the table beside the tray, "it seems to me that under the bed is no place for it."

The little girl felt so uncomfortable that she ate much less than usual, and when Jane had gone she took up the luckless shaker, and wondered how she could go on hiding it till Monday. Maybe Jane would tell Catherine, and Catherine would tell her mother, and then her mother would ask to see the parcel. Oh, dear ! how she wished she had not torn Nanny Tavish's bonnet, or, better still, that she had not made the rash promise of buying another, and just then, to her further dismay, she heard her brothers and sisters coming up stairs.

Too well she knew that Catherine was not with them now ; she never was with them only when Mr. Blun was at home, or when it was near the time of his coming home.

The whole troop would make at once for her room ; she was sure that was their object in coming up stairs now, and she had only time to put the parcel again under the bed, when they burst upon her. Walter, one of the twins, and the most mischievous of all the children, began to dance round Helen, and the others in a moment were dancing round her too. But Helen was in no humor for such fun, and she tried to stop it by pinching and slapping wherever she could get a chance to do so. The children pinched and

slapped her in return, and at length Walter and Arden each caught one of her long curls, and pulled her down to the floor.

The pain she suffered from being thus dragged down, was nothing to her terror lest they should see the parcel under the bed.

“Let me up,” she begged, “and I’ll give you something.”

That offer made them all stop at once.

“What?” asked the twins in a breath, while Lulu lisped :

“What’ll ’oo dive us?”

Alas for Helen! that was another rash promise. What had she to give that they had not taken long ago, except one precious thing, a beautiful picture book called the “Child’s Book of Nature.”

It had been given to her by a gentleman who sometimes came to see her father, and she never had dared to keep it anywhere except in the case in the back parlor among her father’s books. And whenever she wanted to look at it, she used to steal to the parlor locking herself in, and hardly daring to stir lest she should be discovered.

It nearly broke her heart to think of giving this lovely book away, but she must save the shaker at all costs, so she said :

“I’ll give you that picture book Mr. Townley gave me.”

As they all knew of Mr. Townley’s gift and how their sister valued it, the surprising offer to give it to them filled them with delight.

Of course she had to get it for them, and to do that she must disobey her father ; but the disobedience was so little it did not trouble her much ; and her brothers and sisters were so anxious to possess the book that not one of them gave a thought to the disobedience.

They agreed to wait in the hall outside the parlor door while she went to the book case, and when,

with a last, sad, longing look, she gave up the volume, a fight began for its possession. In the quarrel the book was torn and the beautiful pictures were scattered about the floor of the hall. Helen felt as if she could not bear it, but she said only, while tears of vexation filled her eyes :

“Oh how could you tear my beautiful book !”

“You gave it to us,” cried Walter, speaking in a tone that showed he was quite ready to turn his attack upon her, and then seeing a chance to snatch some leaves that Arden held, he did so, and ran with them to the yard.

Arden went after him, and the other little ones, without stopping to pick up the pictures ran after Arden. Helen sorrowfully gathered up the leaves, and went back to the parlor to put them in such order as she might, quite forgetting in her grief, and anxiety to save even the little that was left of the book, that she was disobeying her father's command.

After a little she heard the street door close ; that recalled her and she ran to one of the windows of the front parlor, and saw her mother go down the street. Then she went back to finish arranging the torn leaves, and as she did so, she was quite conscious of wrong doing, but it was so much more pleasant in the large parlor than in her own room, and now that she knew the shaker was safe for a time at least, she felt more and more like staying where she was.

She was sure the bonnet was safe for she could hear the children playing in the yard, and no one else was likely to go to her room.

She became so interested in reading again and again the descriptions of the pictures, that she did not notice how the noise of the children had quite stopped, till she was startled by a sudden and very loud shout of merriment from the yard. She sprang to the window and from it she saw what seemed to take away from her all power of speech or motion.

The children had formed themselves into a pro-

cession, Walter leading, and he was carrying on the handle of the kitchen broom the shaker bonnet she had left under the bed. There it was in all its glory of blue silk cape and ribbons, doing duty for a flag, and the children were marching after it with every sign of frantic delight.

The little ones having grown tired of the book they had torn so wantonly, had stolen up to Helen's room intending to burst in upon her with an Indian war whoop. They did so, and not finding her in the room; Walter proposed they should all hide under the bed till she came up; the bundle was found and of course opened at once, and then the children descended to the yard to have their fun out.

Poor Helen was ready to faint. Fortunately her mother was out, so she could act without fear of her.

She darted down the basement stair, and out to the yard.

"Walter if you don't give me that bonnet this minute, I shall tell papa."

Wild fear had given to her voice and manner a most unusual air of authority. It brought the whole procession to a stop, and made Walter lower the broomstick. Seeing he did that, Helen went on:

"You know what papa will do when I tell him you spoiled my bonnet."

"Your bonnet," said Walter doubtfully, but lowering the broomstick still more, "I never saw you with that kind of a bonnet, and what did you have it under the bed for?"

"Because I wanted to keep it nice and clean, and there wasn't room for it in the wardrobe. Let me have it, Walter, and I won't tell on you."

"Tell on me," he said with boyish scorn, "I bet you won't tell on me; if you do, I'll tell on you. Papa said you weren't to go out of your room all day."

How much longer the argument might have gone on, it is not easy to say, for just then the cook seeing through the kitchen window the broom she had

been looking for, for several minutes, came out angrily to take it. That gave a chance to Helen to seize the shaker and dart with it to her own room. The children did not follow her, Walter being more afraid of her threat than he would like to have owned; he knew how his father always punished any want of care about their clothes, how much more would he punish this wilful soiling of Helen's bonnet, and though he wondered when she got it, and why she had never worn it, it did not come into his childish mind to think there was anything wrong in her having it. Poor Helen wished the shaker, Nanny Tavish and Lizzie Morrell were a thousand miles away, and as she looked at it to see what harm the little torments had done to it she felt like tearing it to pieces.

It was not much the worse, and she wrapped it again in the brown paper which the children had thrown on the floor. But what to do with it after that puzzled her more than ever. Under the bed was no longer a safe place. Where *should* she put it?

In her perplexity she looked up and the top of the wardrobe caught her eye; she would throw it up there but how should she ever get it down again, as the wardrobe was so high it nearly touched the ceiling. She made up her mind to throw it there, anyhow, and to trust to some chance to get it down on Monday morning; so, she flung it up with all her might, but instead of going entirely over the edge of the wardrobe it fell midway, and one half of it stuck out in full view.

It even moved to and fro for a couple of seconds as if it were going to fall, and Helen hoped it would, so as to give her another chance of throwing it out of sight; but it did not, and she was in greater distress than ever lest her mother should come in and see it. Mrs. Blun however, when she came back was in too much of a hurry to have Catharine finish her dress, to give time or thought to Helen, or indeed to any of the children further than to keep them from annoying her.

The children were having fun in turning a little summer house that stood at the bottom of the large yard into a store where they sold clay for sugar and grass for vegetables, and that work kept them quiet till after luncheon. Then Walter wanted to change the store for a make believe real dwelling house where he could play at being Mr. Blun, and Susie, Mrs. Blun. Susie liked that idea but she wanted dishes, and pans and pots so as to be a real housekeeper, and Arden and Lulu were sent to take what they could without being seen, from the kitchen and dining room closets. The coast was unusually clear, Cook being out at the front area gate for a short gossip with a friend, and Jane doing upstairs work.

The little hands under the direction of Walter and Susie worked well, carrying article after article till every pan and pot in the kitchen closet that was neither too heavy nor too large, and every dish in the dining room closet that did not have the same objection, was brought out to the summer house ; and Walter and Susie themselves made journeys to make the house furnishing complete, in their zeal carrying away even the table goblets and some of the table napkins.

Thus far they had broken nothing, though that was more from good fortune than care, and not one of them thought of closing the closet doors ; so, when Jane who came on the scene before Cook had ended her gossip, saw the empty closet shelves, her first thought was that a thief had been at work. She ran in dismay to the kitchen, seeing the same state of things there ; she looked out into the yard, hearing the sound of the children's voices, but not seeing them, as they were in the summer house. Then she went to look for the cook, frightening that good woman so much by what she told that Cook left her friend without even saying good bye. But Cook was wiser than Jane ; one look at the open and half empty closets was enough for her.

“It’s them villains of children,” she said, “didn’t they have my broom to-day with Miss Helen’s bonnet on the top of it. Go down there now, where they’re playing, and I warrant you’ll find every one of the dishes.”

Jane did so, Cook following her, as soon as the children saw them they scampered in all directions, leaving the two women to take back the pans and pots and dishes amid no small amount of scolding and grumbling.

Helen in her room had grown very tired of having nothing to do ; to be sure she had lessons to study, but she felt so miserable about the shaker that she could not give her mind to study. How she longed for Monday in order to have done with the wretched thing, and as she walked up and down the room, casting worried glances at the tell tale parcel, she began to feel as she had never felt before, the unhappiness of wrong doing.

Her sin had brought already so many punishments. How much better if after making that rash promise to buy Nanny Tavish a shaker, she had made up her mind to have the courage to tell Nanny that she had not been able to keep her promise. What was the shame of saying that to what she had suffered since she bought the bonnet, to say nothing of the reproach of her conscience for her terrible lie. In her weariness and sadness she threw herself on the bed, and at length she fell asleep, and so soundly did she sleep she did not hear the noise made by Jane who was sweeping the floor of the nursery just above.

Jane’s heavy foot shook the ceiling a little and caused the unsteady parcel on the ward-robe to fall to the ground. But even that did not wake Helen, nor did the coming in some time after of little Lulu. The child looking for amusement for herself had gone away from the other children, and she thought there might be some fun in going to her sister’s room. To open the parcel lying before her was fun, and at

it she went, seating herself on the floor beside it, and soon bringing forth the shaker.

Delighted to have it in her own hands, she put it on ; then she took it off, and began to look at the cape that Walter had said would do for a streamer ; pulling at it so hard she tore it a little from the crown. She put it on again, and getting up from the floor toddled over to the looking glass, and just then Helen awoke.

Was it a dream ? the bonnet that had been on the top of the wardrobe, now perched on the head of her sister ? But the sight was too real, for Lulu in great delight was turning her head from side to side, and grunting with satisfaction. With a bound Helen was out of the bed, and plucking the miserable head gear with one hand from Lulu's head, while with the other she shook the child till she began to cry.

"I'll tell mamma on'oo," she said, making for the door.

That threat frightened Helen ; she caught the child and tried to pacify her. But Lulu, after the example of the morning made up her mind to drive a bargain.

"What 'll'oo dive me ?" she asked, stopping her tears.

"O, Lulu ; I haven't anything to give you."

"Then, I'll tell on'oo," beginning to cry again.

"Well, what do you want ?" asked Helen in desperation not knowing but each moment would bring some one to her room before she could again hide the shaker.

Lulu did not know what to ask for, but she meant to have some pay for her silence ; she thought a moment, her eyes fixed on her sister's long yellow curls.

At length she said :

"I want one of 'oo turls ; I want it for steamer."

She meant streamer. Helen was aghast, but there was no help for it ; the child insisted, and insisted also on having one of the very longest. Helen in her nervous fear and excitement fancying she heard

some one coming put the shaker under the bed, and went to her bureau to get a pair of scissors.

"Tut this un," said the child, pulling the one she wanted ; fortunately, it was toward the back of the head and as Helen lopped it off she tried to comfort herself by thinking she could brush her hair so as to hide what had been cut.

Lulu was satisfied and she left the room. Then the shaker was brought again from under the bed and looked at ruefully. It was beginning to show the effect of so much handling ; it had not quite the clean, new look it had when it was bought, and the rip in the cape was not an improvement. Helen hated the very sight of it, and she began to be quite hopeless about hiding it. It seemed to be found no matter where she put it. She would hardly be surprised if it should pop up that evening at the dinner table before her father. But she must put it somewhere, and she must wrap it up once more to keep even its present clean look. The brown paper had undergone so much handling that it was also rumpled and torn ; but with care she managed to use it, and then once more she looked about her for a place of hiding. An idea came to her. She put it, paper wrapping and all in one of her soiled aprons, and then creeping under the bed with it hung it by means of pins to one of the slats. In that way it could not be seen unless one actually got quite under the bed.

In the meantime, Lulu, holding fast to the curl, had toddled down stairs, and into the kitchen looking for something to tie the curl to. She did not want the other children to know anything about it till she could show them what she had done with it all by herself, and she was glad they were nowhere in sight. With Walter as a guide they were making a ditch round the summer house using their hands for shovels, and their aprons for carts to take away the dirt.

Cook was busy getting the dinner. Soup was

steaming on the fire, and vegetables in different stages of preparation were on one of the kitchen tables. On another table was a silver plated dish filled with batter for a pudding, with a tablespoon in the middle of it.

The kitchen at meal times was always an interesting place to Lulu, and she stood by the table where the pudding was, forgetting why she had come into the kitchen, and looking quietly about her. Her cunning ways and amusing lisp made her a favorite with all the servants, while her manner less noisy than that of the other children won her more indulgence. The cook much as she disliked to have any one in the kitchen when she was very busy, never said anything to Lulu; and now as she saw the little girl standing so quietly, she only smiled at her.

The table spoon sticking in the batter made Lulu want ever so much to stir it, just as she had seen the cook stir things. She knew that the reason she was treated with such favor was because she never meddled with anything cook was doing. Cook herself had told her so, and often had held her up as a model in that respect for the older children. But, just now, it seemed as if she must stir that batter once, and taking a chance when the cook's back was quite turned she caught the spoon with the hand that also held the curl, and began to work it round and round in the batter; an end of the curl straggled down till it was caught with the spoon and stirred in also. Lulu though that was better fun than to make a streamer of the hair since she did not know what to get to fasten the hair to, and with one eye on the cook, she after a little worked the whole of the long curl into the pudding. By the time the cook turned round the hair was entirely covered, and the pudding with the spoon sticking in the middle of it looked quite as it did before.

Mrs. Blun in spite of her annoyance at having to take some of the money she was saving to buy lace,

was in a state of great satisfaction for Catharine had finished her dress, and it looked just like the French model it had been made after. As she sent the nurse and seamstress to dress the children for dinner she never gave a thought to what they had been doing during the day, nor even how Helen had borne the confinement to her room.

Catharine, however was not quite so satisfied ; her success in the dress-making line made her think a good deal of asking more wages ; that is if she were going to stay in the Blun family to fill two situations, and when she found four of the children so full of dirt that their heads had to be scrubbed as well as their faces, she was almost ready to give up her place at once.

She drove them before her, and as they rushed past the kitchen door, cook put her head out and said to Catharine ; “ Here’s the gem of them all, little Lulu, standing as quiet and good as an angel.”

But Catharine could see neither angels nor gems at this time, and she answered : “ There isn’t a decent one in the whole family.”

Mr. Blun came home from his business that evening, feeling none of the satisfaction of his wife. One of his clerks had disobeyed a rule, and Mr Blun thought that the whole discipline of the store was upset thereby ; and the proprietor himself felt so upset by it, that he forgot when he took his seat at the dinner table and saw Helen’s empty chair, that his own order was the cause of her absence.

Helen, not knowing whether her father would think her day of confinement over with the arrival of the dinner hour, had been afraid to go down ; but she had made her toilet and sat waiting to be called. She was afraid he would ask her if she had left her room, and she wondered if she should answer boldly, no, whether her brothers and sisters would contradict her statement ; perhaps not since she had only left the room to please them. Her fear of their tattling

was much greater than her fear of telling the lie ; it was only a *little* lie, she said to herself.

Mr. Blun asked sternly where Helen was. Mrs. Blun arched her handsome eyebrows, and answered as if she were very much astonished :

“My dear, you told her to keep her room.”

Mr. Blun was greatly vexed ; vexed with himself that he had forgotten his own command, and that he should have been guilty of such forgetfulness in the presence of his family ; he was vexed also that his wife should have spoken to him in such a manner, but he only said that Helen’s dinner should be taken to her. After that everybody ate in silence.

When the dessert was brought on and placed before Mr. Blun, (Mrs. Blun’s judgment not being trustworthy in the matter of serving dessert,) and he began to place upon each little plate just three small tablespoonfuls of the tempting looking pudding, five pairs of eyes sparkled with delighted expectation. But when he came to the centre of the dish, he lifted out something that was surely not the pudding, something that seemed to pull away from the spoon, and to grow long, and at length, that showed itself to his disgusted gaze as human hair. It was so discolored and matted that no one could tell it to be the curl Lulu had stirred into the batter, and Lulu with a sharpness beyond her four years, looked as if the discovery was as great a surprise to her as to everybody else.

“Mrs. Blun,” said Mr. Blun, speaking to his wife, “is this the way you let your servants do their work ?”

Mrs. Blun getting very red, said :

“I have nothing to do with the cook’s work.”

“Then it is time that you had ; some supervision is necessary when such a thing as this can happen. Call Cook, Jane.”

Cook was anxious to be called when she heard from Jane a hasty account of why she was wanted.

"Faith, I'll tell him a little of what he ought to have known long ago," she said, and waiting only to tie a clean apron about her, she went boldly into the dining room.

Mr. Blun looking very stern, held up the disgusting thing that had been found in the pudding.

"And do you suppose, Mr. Blun, I'd let the like of that go into any dish that left my hand? you're mistaken, sir, and if you'll inquire among your own unruly children maybe you'll find out where it comes from. If the people in this house that's been hired to take care of the children did take care of them instead of sewing all day for Mrs. Blun there would not be half the mischief done there is."

That speech brought Catharine to her feet with an angry throwing of the blame on Mrs. Blun.

"Stop!" commanded Mr. Blun, but the cook not in the least afraid went on:

"I'm not afraid of your telling me to go, Mr. Blun; with the like of that against me"—pointing to the pudding—"and I entirely innocent of it, I'm willing to go. My old references will get me another place."

She went back to the kitchen quite sure it was Lulu who did the mischief; she remembered how she saw her standing so long by the table where the batter was.

"But, I won't tell on her," she said to herself, "or on any of them; I said enough to make him find out for himself."

• She had said enough to Mr. Blun to make him impatient to look into the "discipline" of his household, and he told Catharine to put the children to bed, and then come to him in the back parlor. Mrs. Blun was very angry, and when her husband wanted her to the council, she answered hotly!

"You had better find out which one of your unruly children put that hair in the pudding."

"*Your* unruly children, Mrs. Blun," he said "to you is entrusted the training of them, and instead of wasting time trying to find out how that thing came

in the pudding, I shall find out whether the work which I—" he said the "I" with great emphasis—"hire people to do in this house is done, or not."

He did find out; Catharine, like the cook having made up her mind that it would be better to be frank with him, and Mr. Blun was very angry when he heard all, but he only said with great slowness and emphasis:

"You will understand, Catharine, that from this night forth your duties are with the children; you are never to leave them for any other work in this house. That is one of the rules I will have maintained in my family, and any breaking of that rule will be punished by instant dismissal without a recommendation. Do you understand me?"

"Yes sir;" said Catharine very meekly. Then Mr. Blun said:

"That is all," and she left the room satisfied that she had said so much, and thankful that for herself it had ended no worse. Mr. Blun then sternly told his wife that the discipline of his establishment could no longer be ignored. She listened, not answering a word, but making up her mind in secret anger that, in spite of his "discipline" she would have all the handsome and stylish dresses she wanted.

It never came into Mr. Blun's mind that the *hearts* of his children were utterly undisciplined, and had anybody told him he was wanting in his duty as a father, he would have been aghast. Did he not provide his family with every necessary, and was he not in all his business relations scrupulously honest? Was he not toiling to make money for his children, did he not teach them by his own example, punctuality, order, and economy? He bitterly blamed his wife for her want of proper training of the children, but he never thought that he also was to blame.

Helen having eaten her dinner in the solitude of her room, and knowing nothing of what had happened in the dining room felt thankful that as yet no one knew of her iniquities.

CHAPTER VIII.

It was Monday morning, a quarter before nine and children everywhere were hurrying to school. Most of them had faces as bright as the lovely morning itself, and their cheerful talk about lessons, marks, and teachers was lively and pleasant. Our three little girls were on their way to school ; Helen Blun with her bag of books on her arm and the shaker carefully wrapped up in her hand. Thanks to what had taken place at the dinner table on Saturday evening she had been saved further torment from her brothers and sisters, for Catharine anxious to show Mr. Blun that she wanted to please him, did not leave the children for a moment on Sunday ; nor did they even go into Helen's room to disturb the shaker.

On this morning, thanks to the same wholesome change in the household, she was able to get off to school without being stopped, or even noticed ; nor had her father of whom she saw but little the day before, said anything more to her than that he hoped her punishment would be a lesson to her never to pin her clothes again instead of sewing them. How much she thought of his advice was seen in the cape of the shaker : she had pinned it where Lulu had torn it.

She felt none of the satisfaction she had imagined she should feel in being able to bring a hat to Nanny Tavish ; instead she felt guilty and uneasy and more than this she did not know a single lesson.

Never in her whole life had she gone to school with such miserable feelings ; as she neared the school house door she tried to give herself some comfort by thinking, that just as soon as possible she would give the shaker to Nanny Tavish, and then she would not think anything more about it.

Lizzie Morrell on *her* way to school with her bag of books on her arm, and in her hand two cents that Dad had given her when he kissed her good bye, was thinking how much money she would need to pay for the breakfast the fruit woman had given her. In her frank confession to her uncle of how she had spent her time after she had written that dreadful order, she had told him of the kindness of the fruit vender, but she did not tell him how she meant to pay for that kindness. She knew if she told him that he would give her the money at once, and she felt as if she ought not to put that expense upon him. So long as it was caused by her own wrong doing she would save the money he sometimes gave her till she had enough to pay her debt. But how much she ought to have puzzled her, and she was thinking so deeply about it that she walked more slowly than usual. Her long talk with Dad on Saturday after her whipping had ended in a promise to him to *try* not to hate Mrs. Morrell, and to *try* not to do things to make her aunt angry ; and Mrs. Morrell herself somewhat sorry for her violent treatment of Lizzie, tried to make up for it by a sort of rough kindness to the child all day Sunday.

In that way there was a sort of truce established between the two ; Mr. Morrell was thankful for it, but he dreaded to think how short the peace might be.

Nanny Tavish was also on her way to school with her bag of books on her arm, her mother's fond lingering kiss still tingling on her lips, and her mind full of its own bright happy thoughts.

The three met at the school door with many others of their class mates, and every one of them cast ques-

tioning looks at the brown paper parcel Helen Blun carried.

Lizzie Morrell with her usual intense dislike of Helen's airs, could not help saying :

"Why didn't your father send a servant with you to carry your bundle?"

Everybody laughed except Nanny Tavish and Helen. Nanny did not laugh because she saw how the speech hurt Helen; and Helen, after a moment of shame-faced silence, got courage to say :

"I carried it myself because it's the shaker I promised to bring Nanny Tavish to pay for the one I tore."

Surprise, and on the part of most of the girls, curiosity to see the shaker which Helen had begun to take out of the paper, kept all silent for a moment. Nanny Tavish blushed, till she felt as if the blood had rushed even into her eyes.

"I couldn't take it, Helen," she said, putting out her hand to ward off the gift though as yet no attempt had been made to present it, "my mother can get me all the hats I need."

Her voice and her lips trembled as she said the last words, but she had drawn her little figure up in a way that made Helen Blun not know what to say next. But Lizzie Morrell was ready to speak.

"Good for you, Nanny Tavish," she said, "not to take her old shaker. I suppose she thinks nobody can buy hats but her father. You just tell your father, Helen Blun, to let *you* wear that shaker. It's a good deal better hat than the one you're got on."

"Girls, its five minutes of nine," came from the monitress at the head of the stairs, "and if you don't come up right away I'll take your names and you'll be counted late."

That threat ended for the present the talk about the shaker, for the girls at once began a rushing ascent to their class room. Helen, still carrying her parcel went a little more slowly than the others; instead of the triumph she had expected to have over

Lizzie Morrell, herself had turned the occasion into one of defeat and shame. How Helen hated her, and she hardly hated Nanny Tavish less for not having taken the bonnet.

"But I know what I'll do," she thought as she got near the class room door.

"At recess I'll put the shaker on Nanny Tavish's desk to show her that she *must* take it."

The girls were already in line to march into the main room for the opening exercises, so there was only time for Helen to put the parcel and her books down and to take off her hat as fast as she could.

The opening exercises on this morning were longer than usual, for after the reading, and singing, Superintendent Jonas gave a lecture on the Empress Josephine. At any other time Helen would have been a delighted listener, for the language of the lecturer was simple and the facts he told interesting, but just now the horrible shaker shut out every other thought. She could not keep her eyes from looking at Lizzie Morrell and Nanny Tavish both of whom happened to sit nearer to each other than they did to Helen, and as their seats were but a little in front of her and a good deal to her right when she turned her eyes in their direction she also had to turn her head. That violation of the perfect order required at the morning assembly caused her name to be taken by her teacher, and this lady finding Helen did it again, squeezed herself in among the desks and said in a sharp whisper :

"Helen Blun, if you don't keep your eyes in front of you, you'll stay in this afternoon till four o'clock."

The whisper reached Lizzie Morrell ; she was delighted that Helen Blun was found fault with, and she leaned forward and "made saucy eyes" at Helen. That movement disturbed the orderly appearance of a whole row of girls, and before the teacher could get across the aisle to speak to Lizzie, she was herself spoken to by the stern disciplinarian, Miss Tibbety

who had supreme charge of the order in the main room.

"Miss Olden," whispered this severe looking person, "there is more disorder in your class during assembly than in any other class in school. I shall have to report it to Miss Amer."

Miss Amer was the Principal, an elderly, grave looking lady of whom scholars and teachers were alike afraid.

And as Miss Olden was young, conscientious, hard working, sensitive, and painfully conscious that she was not a disciplinarian in the sense of being able to keep ramrod order, the rebuke stung her keenly; and did not tend to give her very pleasant feelings toward the two members of her class who had caused it.

During the day at the different recitations in the class room when Helen Blun showed her utter want of study since Friday, Miss Olden gave her little mercy. Indeed, the poor young teacher had a great deal to try her that day for hardly any one in the class except Nanny Tavish seemed to know anything, and when she found that Lizzie Morrell in the midst of a geography lesson was drawing ludicrous pictures and holding them up so the whole class could see them whenever Miss Olden dropped her eyes to the book, she grew very angry.

"Come here to me, Lizzie Morrell," she said sharply.

"Yes ma'am," answered Lizzie demurely, but, as she had been expecting such an order should Miss Olden detect what she was doing, she had managed to wedge her dress in between the seat of the little iron chair and its upright support, and of course each time she tried to get up it was only to fall back more quickly than she rose to the giggling delight of most of her companions.

"Are you coming?" asked the teacher impatiently.

"Yes ma'am; I'm trying as hard as I can to come," and as Lizzie with these words fell back with a more

sudden flop than ever, the whole class laughed aloud.

That brought Miss Olden to the scene of the difficulty, and in desperation she tugged at Lizzie's dress, freeing it at length, and marching Lizzie before her to the front of the room.

In those days, while corporal punishment was not approved of and was even beginning to be deplored by some of the best educators, it was not forbidden, and teachers might use any mode of punishment providing they did not keep children in school all night, nor leave upon them marks of personal violence. Miss Olden in her anger, wanting to give the most severe punishment she could think of felt quite safe in saying :

"Lizzie Morrell, I shall keep you in till five o'clock this afternoon, and I shall send word to your home that I am going to do so, and what it is for. What girl knows where Lizzie Morrell lives?" turning to the class.

A dozen hands went up, but foremost was that of Helen Blun. It would be a satisfaction to Helen to take that message to Lizzie's home for all the ugly things Lizzie had that day done to her ; and she knew that Lizzie did not wish the girls to know just where she lived.

"Helen Blun, you may go during the noon recess, and tell Lizzie Morrell's mother—"

"I aint got any mother," interrupted Lizzie sullenly.

"Well, tell her father."

"Aint got any father."

"Well, what *have* you then ?" asked the teacher, too much provoked to be touched by this confession of orphanage.

"She's got an aunt," said Helen Blun half viciously remembering the feather bed tied in the middle.

"She aint my aunt," said Lizzie passionately, "she's just my uncle's wife."

“ Well,” said Miss Olden who was now both tired and impatient, “ tell whoever you find in Lizzie Morrell’s home why she is going to be kept in so late.”

That punishment was the most severe that could have been given to Lizzie ; not keeping her in after school hours till five o’clock, but sending such a message and sending it by Helen Blun. It would delight Mrs. Morrell to have a complaint from school about Lizzie, but, oh, how sad it would make Dad, and just after her promise to him to try to be good. Then, to have Helen Blun see her tenement home ; to have Helen Blun climb those mean looking stairs, and perhaps meet on them and in the halls coarse, untidy women and children , Helen Blun who lived in such a fine house, and who had so many servants. Then she imagined how Mrs. Morrell would receive the message, and how disgusted Helen would be , oh, it was dreadful, and she stood staring at the black-board in just the spot where Miss Olden had placed her, seeing nothing and thinking of nothing but that awful errand. The spirit of mischief had quite gone from her, and only for her pride she would have begged the teacher to give her some other punishment.

Miss Olden, when her own anger had subsided, wondered that Lizzie was so quiet, and when it was time for the short morning recess, she said to her :

“ You can go down stairs, Lizzie, and when you come up if you think you can behave yourself you can take your seat.”

Lizzie did not answer ; but she followed the class from the room.

Helen Blun remained in her seat ; she wanted to put the shaker on Nanny Tavish’s desk, and Miss Olden following the line of girls out in order to go into another teacher’s room, Helen’s staying behind was not noticed ; she placed the paper covering on the shaker as neatly as she could, and then managed by putting Nanny Tavish’s books a little out of place

to shove the parcel quite into Nanny's desk. After that she joined the girls who she knew were her friends, and began to boast of what she had done and how she would make Nanny Tavish accept the bonnet.

"Because, you know," she said, "when my father went to the trouble of buying it for her, he would be very angry if she didn't take it."

Her ease in telling that lie surprised herself; she was not old enough to know it came from doing one wrong thing after another.

"Yes;" said one of her companions, "and Nanny Tavish's mother is only a washerwoman; I should think she'd be glad enough to get a nice hat like that."

"She just tries to put on airs," said another, "saying her mother could buy her all the hats she needed, when everybody knows her mother's awful poor."

"And, of course," put in a third, "Nanny Tavish is awful proud to-day, because she's the only girl perfect in lessons so far."

At that moment the sound of the bell hurried the girls to their class room. Miss Olden did not come in for a moment, or two, and that gave time enough for Nanny Tavish to find the shaker in her desk.

Anger made her fairly dart with it to Helen Blun, and with face and voice full of indignation, she said:

"I told you I didn't want your bonnet; that my mother could buy me all the bonnets I need; now, don't you ever give that hat to me again."

The sight of her running across the room had drawn the attention of everybody, and when it was known why she had done so, complete silence followed. Then Lizzie Morrell jumped up from her seat, and exclaimed:

"That's right, Nanny; don't you let her dare give you that old shaker—look at it," taking it boldly out of its wrapper, and then seeing the pin in the cape she took it out and held it up before the class.

"Let me have that," said Helen Blun, making a

dive for it. Lizzie threw it with scorn back on Helen's desk, while Nanny trembling and excited went to her seat. Helen feeling again disgraced, did not know what to do more than to stuff the shaker this time into her own desk, and in the act of doing so, the part of her hair where she had cut the curl for Lulu, was seen by Lizzie Morrell. Here was another way to annoy Helen. She felt so bitter because Helen was going on that errand, that she did not care what she said, or did, and Dad having told her about a little girl in London whose lovely curls were cut off and sold by a wicked woman, a bright idea of revenge came into her mind; so catching Helen's hair where it had been cut, she said loud enough for the whole class to hear:

"Say, Helen; did your father have to sell one of your curls to buy that shaker?" What answer angry and abashed Helen would have made was prevented by the entrance of Miss Olden.

In those days the noon recess in the public schools did not mean as it does now going home to dinner, or luncheon for the scholars and for many of the teachers; it meant an eating in the class rooms from lunch baskets, or boxes, of cold, hasty bites, very hasty on the part of many of the scholars in order to have more time for play in the yard. The teachers in many cases got together in some class room and made their cold bites a little more palatable by little pots of tea sent to them by the janitors wife. On those occasions the teachers like the children used to talk a good deal. Indeed, sometimes, one passing the door of the room where they were, would be at a loss to know their noise from that of the children; but that was because those teachers, were mostly all young, and it seemed but a very short time since they themselves were little school girls; then, neither Miss Amer nor Miss Tibbetty were present to awe them into becoming propriety.

On this day Miss Olden was the one who talked

most during the dinner hour. What Miss Tibbetty had said to her in the morning, and her trouble with Lizzie Morrell, which now that it was past, could be told so as to cause everybody to laugh, made subjects of great interest to young women whose experience of life was so little.

"But I'm going to punish her for it." Miss Olden said when the laughter caused by her account of Lizzie's conduct had ceased, "I am going to keep her in till five o'clock this afternoon."

"You'll be punishing yourself," said Miss Robson, a smiling rather stout teacher, who looked as if she never punished herself.

I know I shall, and it's provoking, because I wanted to go home early this afternoon; but I must keep my word; and Helen Blun, just as soon as she eats her lunch is going to tell Lizzie Morrell's aunt, or her uncle's wife, as Lizzie says she is, why she is kept in."

"Helen Blun!" said another teacher, "isn't she pretty? You know I had her last term, and she was very bright; is she bright in your class?"

"Yes, generally;" answered Miss Olden, "but I don't know what is the matter with her to-day, she has acted all the morning as if she didn't know the ocean was water and the dry earth was land."

"Young ladies," they all started and got as quiet as though they were indeed a class of noisy children surprised by an angry teacher.

It was Miss Tibbetty and her severe looking face had actually a glow of pleasure; Miss Robson said it always had when she had disagreeable news to tell.

"Young ladies," she said again, "Mr. Jonas told Miss Amer that it was likely the Examination would take place the week after next, and Miss Amer thought it was well to let you know so that you could get ready."

The Examination: that meant the yearly Examination by the Superintendent, and the bugbear and

dread of every teacher, though in those days its terrors were not made greater as they are now by Examiners for special studies. Superintendents then, not being so learned in their several departments did not ride hobbies as they do now to the sad experience of many a poor teacher.

The Examination not being expected for six weeks to come, the news of it struck dismay into the heart of every one. Miss Tibbetty having waited long enough to see the dismay, went away with a smile. Then the teachers got back their voices and each one had something to say of regret, lamentation, protest, or complaint.

"What shall I ever do? my class doesn't know a thing."

"I never had such a stupid class; it will fail, I know it will."

"Dear me! I don't know where I am in my grade, and I haven't had any review for a month."

"Oh, the geography in my class," this last speech from Miss Olden, "To-day, no one but Nanny Tavish could tell what water we would come to if we walked east to the foot of Rivington Street. Half the class, and among that half bright Helen Blun, said the Caspian Sea."

"Oh, I wouldn't worry about it," said Miss Robson, the only one of the six teachers who seemed not to mind the dreadful news, "Manage as I mean to do about *my* geography for examination."

"How?" asked Miss Olden eagerly.

"I'll come into your room after school and tell you," Miss Robson whispered, "I don't care to tell it before this whole room full."

Miss Olden felt easier and when the noon hour was ended she went back to her class quite hopeful.

Helen Blun had been so eager to go on her errand that she had not waited to finish her lunch, and with a parting look of triumph at Lizzie Morrell she hurried from the room putting on her hat as she went,

hardly hearing Lizzie's scornfully uttered words :

“Why don't you take the shaker bonnet along?”

As she turned into the street where Lizzie lived she looked about her for some one to direct her to Lizzie's house ; she saw a large, awkward looking boy standing in the doorway of the undertaker's shop and she went to him.

“Lizzie Morrell,” he repeated in a sad sort of way, as if the very sound of her name made him unhappy, “there aint many in this ere street as don't know where *she* lives. She's made her mark in these parts, she has ; at least in the undertaking line ; she lives in that house down there, up two pair o' stairs,” and Thimig came out on the sidewalk and pointed to the house ; he even walked a few steps with Helen to make quite sure she would find it. As he walked back to his old place in the doorway he said to himself :

“She's a nice looking little girl ; seemes like as if she belonged to one of them ere big bugs. I wonder what she wants with a wild 'un like Lizzie Morrell ; but then Lizzie Morrell has eyes ; eyes as a feller can't forget.”

As Helen Blun went forward, she thought :

“What a funny looking boy, and what funny things he said about Lizzie Morrell,”

When she went into the tenement house, she met in the hall way several dirty children and a couple of untidy looking women, and when going up the stairs, the odor of many dinners caused her little nose to turn up with scorn and disgust. It was the first time she had ever been in such a place, and she felt more than ever how much better she was than the girl she had come to complain about.

Her knock at the door brought Mrs. Morrell and Helen delivered her message making even more of Lizzie's misconduct than Miss Olden had done.

“What an awful bad girl,” said Mrs. Morrell when she heard it all, “to give the teacher such trouble

as that—just come in here and tell it to her uncle.”

Thus Helen saw the odd looking figure in the great red bag, and it was only by remembering her manners that she kept from laughing, but she thought what fun she should have in telling the girls in the class how Lizzie’s uncle looked.

Mrs. Morrell was full of virtuous anger.

“Isn’t it a shame to have such a complaint?” she said to her husband, “to think of the teacher having to send home about her,” then she turned to Helen,

“We’re much obliged to you for coming to tell us.”

But her thanks did not keep Helen from thinking that Mrs. Morrell was more of a feather bed than ever.”

Mr. Morrell said quietly when he heard the whole story :

“Lizzie did very wrong to give the teacher so much trouble, but I wish the teacher would punish her some other way than keeping her in two hours after school is out.”

Mrs. Morrell said to Helen when she parted with her at the door :

“You tell the teacher to keep Lizzie in till six o’clock if she likes ; it’s little enough punishment for what she’s done.”

And that was the message Helen gave to Miss Olden, keeping back every thing Mr. Morrell had said.

During the afternoon Helen found an opportunity to whisper to the girls who sat near her how Mr. Morrell looked. It was a very funny account, but they did not dare to laugh before the teacher, though some of them were compelled to put their hands to their faces many times. Great care was taken to keep Lizzie from knowing what all the secret amusement was about, till Miss Olden was called from the room ; she was summoned by Miss Amer to account for her want of discipline during assembly in the morn-

ing, the same having been conscientiously reported by Miss Tibbety. Her absence from the room gave a chance to Helen to let some of the other girls into the secret of the amusement.

“He was the funniest looking thing you ever saw,” she said loud enough for Lizzie Morrell to hear, “with a red flannel bag tied around him, and a red night cap on.”

Lizzie knew then it was Dad Helen Blun was talking about, and that it was Helen’s description of him that had caused all the sly looks and the giggling. Her beloved Dad ; the only creature she loved in the whole wide world. She jumped to her feet her eyes and her cheeks blazing, and her whole form trembling.

“You are a bad, mean girl, Helen Blun, to talk about my uncle like that—the red bag you talk about is red flannel because he has the rheumatism, and he’s just as good as your father and a heap sight better—he’s just the nicest, sweetest, dearest, best, lovingest man that ever was born.”

In her passionate affection for him, and her wild desire to defend him, she said the first words that came to her mind ; then her feelings became too strong for her and she burst into tears.

It was the first time any of her classmates had seen her actually crying ; she had always seemed a quick-tempered, fun loving little girl, and the strange sight touched many of them, but no one so much as Nanny Tavish. The scene went to Nanny’s heart because Lizzie’s love for her uncle was so like Nanny’s love for her mother, and she could not bear it. She left her seat, and going to Lizzie threw her arms around her neck.

“Don’t feel so bad, Lizzie,” she said,

“You are a good girl to love your uncle so dearly, and Helen Blun and the other girls ought to be ashamed of themselves for making fun of him.”

Helen Blun looked as if she were made a little bit

ashamed by the sympathy most of the class seemed to feel for Lizzie, and she was glad to see Miss Olden come in just then.

Miss Olden was much annoyed ; she had come from a lecture concerning her utter want of discipline.

Miss Amer had said to her :

“ You *must* keep better order, Miss Olden ; you must learn to command by your eye, Miss Tibbetty reports, and indeed, I could not help seeing it myself that during Mr. Jonas’ lecture you actually had to spoil the order of the school by going between the desks to speak to one of the girls in your class ; it should have been enough for you to look at her.”

Miss Olden coming back to her class room and seeing the general disorder, finding even model Nanny Tavish, who never had to be spoken to, away from her seat, was so incensed she did not wait to find out what had caused this breach of discipline or who was chiefly to blame.

“ Every one of you,” she said in a shrill tone, “ take a debit.”

In those days the “ debit” was like the failure of the present day.

“ Not a word,” she went on, as a dozen hands were raised to protest against this whole-sale injustice, for some of the girls had been mere silent lookers on, and they were naturally very indignant.

“ As for you, Nanny Tavish, you deserve a double debit for daring to leave your seat.”

Nanny had gone back to her place and she became very red at being spoken to so harshly but she gave no other sign of her feelings. Lizzie, however, with her passionate, affectionate, sensitive nature stirred to its greatest depths by the kind act of Nanny, could not bear that Nanny should be punished so unjustly, and with utter disregard of Miss Olden’s command not to speak, she said loud enough for the whole class to hear :

“Nanny Tavish doesn’t deserve to have a debit at all ; it is Helen Blun that——” but she could get no further, for Miss Olden very angry at this defiance of her order, caught Lizzie by the shoulder, and shook her, saying :

“Lizzie Morrell, if you say another word, I’ll take you out to Miss Amer and get her to send for your aunt. Your aunt sent word to me to keep you in till six o’clock, and I think from that she is a very sensible person ; she will see that you are punished as you ought to be.”

Lizzie knew only too well how gladly and promptly Mrs. Morrell would answer such a message, so she did not say anything more, but her pulses throbbed, and her heart ached with a sense of injustice, and in her generous nature, not the wrong done to herself, but the hurt inflicted upon kind little Nanny. If it had not been for her uncle and Nanny’s kindness, her feelings toward the whole human race would have been bitter almost beyond power of softening.

Helen Blun was perhaps the most contented girl in the class under the loss of her marks. She knew there was no injustice done to *her*, and it did not trouble her that there had been any done to Nanny, for had Nanny not given herself such airs about the shaker, there would not perhaps have been any of this trouble, and as for Lizzie Morrell, the only feeling Helen Blun had for her was a sort of fierce satisfaction at her punishment.

The afternoon passed without any other incident to mark it, and Miss Olden worked up almost to hysterics from anger, anxiety, and discouragement, was very glad when three o’clock came. But there were Helen Blun and Lizzie Morrell to detain, the former till four, and the latter till five o’clock. She was sorry now she had said she would keep them so long, for it did indeed, as Miss Robson had said, punish herself most of all and this afternoon when she was so tired and discouraged it hurt her sorely. But she

knew that to maintain her authority in the class, her word must be kept, and she resigned herself with a weary air to the long detention. Expecting Miss Robson, she told the two girls to seat themselves in the back part of the room, and to take everything they had in their desks with them ; she intended to give them work to do which should keep both their eyes and their ears from paying attention to her and her visitor.

The pupils rose to obey, and Lizzie watching Helen as a cat might watch a mouse saw that the shaker was not going to be taken from its place in Helen's desk. Her hand was up at once :

"Miss Olden, Helen Blun isn't taking all her things out of her desk."

"Helen Blun, didn't I say you were to take everything with you ?" said Miss Olden sharply, and Helen with an angry look at Lizzie pulled out the shaker and put it on top of her books. Lizzie Morrell smiled an exasperating smile ; it was her turn to have a little amusement now ; Helen had had it all the afternoon.

When the change in their seats had been made with a good distance between the two, Miss Olden said :

"Helen Blun, you write your name a hundred times, and you, Lizzie Morrell, write yours two hundred times, and if they are not written just as nicely as you know how to write, you shall stay in to-morrow afternoon again."

By this time Miss Robson had come in, and as there was only one chair in the room she seated herself on the table, making Miss Olden take the chair, and draw it as close as possible to the table ; then Miss Robson began in a whisper :

"My plan is this ; you see in all the schools they've been so far, this year they are letting the teachers do a good deal of the examining ; now I am just going to give each girl her place, and make out my

list of questions in geograpy and study them, and then each girl will know what question she is going to get, and of course, from our having gone over the questions three or four times beforehand, she will know what answer she is to give."

"Are you going to do *that*?" said Miss Olden in great surprise, "will that be honest?"

"Honest fiddlesticks!" answered her companion, "when we've done our duty all the year round teaching as hard as we can, and then have a man who has a mighty easy time of it compared with us poor teachers, come in to find out what we haven't taught, is excuse enough to pull the wool over his eyes a little bit."

But conscientious Miss Olden shook her head.

"I don't feel satisfied to do that."

"Well, don't do it then," said her companion, "I didn't ask you to do it; I only told you, because you seemed to be in such distress this morning, what my plan was, and I am going to adopt it. I have no scruples about it whatever, for I think school teaching, at least the part that relates to those yearly examinations, is like war; all is fair in dealing with the Superintendents."

She jumped from the table laughing, and with a merry adieu went out of the room. Miss Olden looked after her with envious eyes—the duties and the cares of teaching seemed to trouble her so little.

It was four o'clock; Helen had written her name carefully one hundred times and she was told to go home. She went to the closet where the clothing of the class was kept taking with her, her books and the shaker; she knew if she left the shaker where she had been sitting, Lizzie Morrell would wickedly tell Miss Olden. But she thought while slowly putting on her bonnet that it would be a good thing to hang the shaker on one of the hooks farthest out of sight in the closet, and then the janitor would find it and keep it till somebody should claim it; if no owner were

found he would dispose of it, and she at least would be rid of the hateful thing. So, watching her chance when Lizzie's eyes were turned on her slate, she hung the bonnet on one of the most remote hooks in the closet, and darted out of the room. When Lizzie looked up from her slate she stretched her neck to be quite sure that Helen had not left the shaker anywhere about her seat.

The extra hour of her own punishment was at length ended, and she went to the closet to get her bonnet; her keen eyes saw the shaker.

"I'll take it home and bring it to her to-morrow morning," she gleefully thought, and as Miss Olden in a hurry to go home herself, had her bonnet on, her closet and table drawer locked, and her roll book on her arm when she told Lizzie she might go, she herself had gone before Lizzie had risen from her seat. She had left without a parting word to the child, but that was because her thoughts were busy with what Miss Robson had said to her; if she could only throw aside her scruples. Alas! the very wish to do so was a sign that the temptation would not be resisted.

Lizzie was so much delighted in the thought of bringing the shaker to Helen in the morning she did not care that Miss Olden had gone without speaking to her; indeed, she had spent much of her time in making faces at her teacher, and she had written on her slate, though of course she rubbed it directly off.

"Miss Olden is a horrid, ugly teacher." She would have added:

"And I hate her," only she had promised Dad in that talk on Saturday afternoon, that she would try never to hate any body.

So there was no one to see her when she took the shaker and tying its strings together hung it boldly on her arm; then, with her bag of books on her other arm she went home. She had to pass the

undertaker's shop on the way to her own house and Thimig, standing in the doorway—in fine weather he spent most of his time in the doorway—went into the shop when he saw her. He felt too sore yet to speak to her, though, as he said to himself ;

“That girl's eyes was a goin' straight into my heart.”

Mrs. Morrell was in the hall talking to one of her neighbors when Lizzie went in.

“What's that you have?” she said, seeing the shaker on Lizzie's arm, and forgetting in her curiosity to scold the child for her bad conduct in school.

“One of the girls in our class left it in the closet, and I thought I'd bring it home and keep it for her,” answered Lizzie, knowing that if she did not give a satisfactory reply her aunt would be sure to say something that she would not want to hear.

“Do you know which of the girls left it?” asked Mrs. Morrell, eager to show the other woman how well Lizzie was brought up.

“Yes, Helen Blun,” said Lizzie beginning to ascend the stair, but Mrs. Morrell placed herself before her, saying :

“I suppose it was for fear it would be stolen you brought it home ; that was very good of you, Lizzie. You see, Mrs Cartan, the result of teachin' a child to be strictly honest ; me and her uncle are all the time harpin' on that, and thank God, we're gettin' our reward.” Lizzie, in secret indignation at this speech was trying unavailingly to squeeze herself under her aunt's arm.

“And now, my plan 'll be, Mrs. Cartan, to send Lizzie to the little girl's house with the hat ; it'll be a lesson in honesty for both of them. Do you know where the little girl lives, Lizzie ?”

Did she know ? Helen Blun's residence was well known to every child in the class, and at the idea of taking the shaker to Helen's house Lizzie's eyes

sparkled, but she said quietly lest her aunt should see how glad she was.

“Yes, I know where she lives.”

“Well, give me your bag, and you go right away with the hat. That’s my motto, Mrs. Cartan ; don’t let the grass grow under your feet when it’s a question of honesty. So run, ahead, Lizzie.”

Lizzie needed no second order ; she was out of the house like a hare and down the street like “a streak o’lightning,” as Thimig said to himself ; he had gone again to the doorway, and he saw her dart out of the house, and down the block to the corner.

As Lizzie had taken her time in walking home from school, and some minutes had passed while Mrs. Morrell was talking in the hall, and as it was some distance to Helen’s house, it was six o’clock when Lizzie reached there and the whole Blun family were assembled at the dinner table. Lizzie could see the shadows of some of them on the window shades, and her heart beat quickly as she wondered which door she should enter ; the grand looking upper door, or the plain basement door ; as the family seemed to be in the lower part of the house she decided to apply at the basement door, and she did so, closing the area gate after her because she had found it closed,—Mr. Blun having gone in before her,—and ringing rather timidly the basement bell.

Jane on her way from the dining room to the kitchen, opened the door, and as the dining room door was wide open, and as the Blun family ate in silence, Lizzie’s voice was heard distinctly as she said :

“I called with this bonnet that Helen Blun left in school to-day.”

“What’s that ?” said Mr. Blun startled from his decorum at hearing words that told of such carelessness on the part of his daughter.

“You had better wait a moment, little girl,” said Jane, hearing Mr. Blun’s sharply spoken question,

and hurrying back to the dining room, without however taking the shaker, to tell the message.

"Bring her in here," Mr. Blun ordered, and Lizzie holding up the shaker, stepped into the handsome dining room.

Helen had too surely known Lizzie's voice, and she had turned pale, but when she saw her, and the irrepressible shaker, she thought she was going to faint. She could not look anywhere but at her plate and that seemed to have multiplied itself into a great number of plates.

"Is this your bonnet, Helen?" asked Mr. Blun, taking the shaker from Lizzie, and holding it up to the astonished gaze of the whole family, "and did you walk home from school in your barehead?" he went on, his voice growing more and more stern as he saw the signs of guilt in his daughter's down cast and crimson face. She could not lift her head to answer him, but Mrs. Blun, knowing that Helen had never worn a shaker, said:

"That certainly is not Helen's bonnet; she has never worn such a thing in her life."

"Why, Helen said it was her bonnet," cried Walter, recognizing the shaker that his sister had made him give up when he had taken it for a flag; and feeling in the light of the present information as if it had been taken from him under false pretenses, he went on wickedly:

"She had it under her bed to keep it clean, she said."—

"What *does* this mean?" asked Mr. Blun, bewildered by the extraordinary revelations. He asked Helen again:

"Is this your bonnet, and did you come home from school to-day without any covering to your head?"

But the wretched child was still not able to answer: not able even to look at her father, and Lizzie burst out impulsively:

"It isn't the bonnet Helen wears herself to school;

she said her father bought it for her to give Nanny Tavish because Friday afternoon she tore Nanny Tavish's shaker; and she did give it to Nanny Tavish to-day, but Nanny wouldn't take it, and when I saw it hanging in the closet I thought I'd bring it home to Helen."

Here was the story of a lie which Helen must have told, for Mr. Blun knew he had neither bought, nor given an order to buy a shaker bonnet for any of Helen's classmates. He rose from his chair and said :

"Helen Blun !"

His voice sounded dreadful to her ; it compelled her eyes to meet his.

"Is the statement made by this child true ?"

Nobody seemed to breathe, not even the little two year old boy, in the silence that followed and Helen, feeling how useless it would be to tell any more lies, gasped :

"Yes." then she fell forward on the table and burst out crying.

"That is enough," said Mr. Blun, "you may go, little girl," turning to Lizzie, and Lizzie casting a look of pity at Helen went out. With her naturally kind heart the sight of Helen's grief had driven away her angry feelings, and put compassion in their place.

She was sorry now that she had brought the shaker to Helen's house.

"Go up to my room, Helen," ordered her father, "and take this bonnet with you."

Helen obeyed, and her sobs could be heard till the door of her father's room closed upon her.

Even Walter, feeling she was going to get some dreadful punishment, was sorry for what he had told about the bonnet, and the other children were too frightened to eat any more dinner. Mrs. Blun was very much vexed ; this trouble would cause her husband to give one of his tiresome lectures on "disci-

pline," and dear knows what disagreeable new rules he would make for the house ; she thought he had made enough on Saturday to last a lifetime.

But what Mr. Blun's thoughts, or plans were, no one could tell ; his face kept its stern look, and he ate his dinner in silence. When everybody had finished he gave the usual signal for rising and leaving the room, and when they all had filed out before him, he, looking very stern and determined, went up alone to Helen.

CHAPTER IX.

WHEN Nanny Tavish went home that Monday afternoon, she did not wait even to get her bonnet off before she told her mother everything that had happened during the day.

Happy child that she was to have a mother who listened to her so fondly, and who said gently when all was told :

“I am sorry, Nanny, you refused Helen Blun’s shaker in the way you did ; I wish you had thanked her and told her kindly you couldn’t take it.”

“Oh, but mamma, if you had seen the way she gave it to me and the airs she puts on because she lives in a nice street and in a fine house ; all the girls say she’s the richest girl in our class, and it made me feel so mean to have *her* give me that hat as if she knew you were too poor to buy me one.”

“Yes, my darling, that may be all true, but at the same time we must try to be kind to everybody, and if only you had said :

“I thank you, Helen, for your kindness in bringing me a bonnet for the one you tore, but I can’t take it ; it would have pleased me very much.”

“Oh, but mamma ! I couldn’t, it just seemed to me when she took the shaker out of the paper before all the girls, and said her father had bought it for me, as if I could not breathe, and when she put it in my desk, as if to make the girls think I had taken it, I just thought I’d like to—” she stopped suddenly getting very red.

"Like to what?" asked Mrs. Tavish smiling fondly so that the child would not be afraid to tell her everything, "you surely would not have struck her."

"No, mamma; I don't think I would ever do anything like that; but, oh, if you only knew how Helen Blun hurt me, and Lizzie Morrell was the only girl in the whole class that seemed to stand by me. And then Helen Blun made all the trouble. If it hadn't been for her none of us would have lost our marks." Her mother said:

"I know it was all very hard, dear, but at the same time we should not forget *our* duty, and don't you think Nanny darling, it is a good deal more to our credit to do what we feel to be right when everything seems to be making us want to do the other way? If I were you, dear, to-morrow, I'd go to Helen Blun, and say:

"I'm sorry, Helen, for the rude way I spoke to you when you brought me the bonnet yesterday; I thank you for your kindness in bringing it, but of course I couldn't take it."

"Oh, mamma! I couldn't do that," and Nanny's face got redder still.

"Well, dear; I don't *ask* you to do it; I only say that if I were you I think I would try to do it, and Nanny, darling, if you do, you will please me very much."

She said no more, but stooped and kissed the little girl, and then went on with her work of preparing for the wash tub the clothes she had taken from different homes during the morning. Nor did Nanny say any more, but she could not get out of her mind her mother's last words; she knew it would be a great victory over herself to do as her mother desired, but it was so hard. What satisfaction it would give to Helen Blun; and maybe Lizzie Morrell, when she heard of it, would think that she, Nanny, had no spirit. She felt that, no matter how privately she might make the apology, Helen Blun would lose

no time in telling it to the whole class. All these thoughts made her so tired she was glad when her mother said :

“ I shall want some soap, dear ; would you mind going for it now ? and if you like, you can take a walk at the same time.”

Nanny sprang up and was ready in a moment to go on the errand.

Recent incidents were apt with Nanny to make her forget the impressions caused by earlier ones, so that the incidents of that day had driven from her mind the thoughts caused by her visit to Staten Island. Indeed, in the part that Helen Blun was playing just now, in Nanny's daily life, the mysterious Egbert was almost entirely forgotten, and as the studying of her lessons and the dreamy delights of composing little stories and rhymes did not get on well together, the stories and rhymes were always put off till Saturday ; then her lessons having been studied on Friday afternoon, she was free to give the whole of the next day to her fancies.

As she walked along towards the Bowery, her thoughts were busy with Helen Blun and all that had happened during the day, and with nothing else. As she turned into the Bowery a poorly dressed blind man was fumbling with his stick at the curb trying to guide himself across the street. Though many people passed him everybody seemed in too much of a hurry to give him more than a glance, and the noise of the wagons made him look as if he did not know which way to go.

Nanny's tender little heart was touched at once, and she went up to him, and caught his hand, saying :

“ I'll take you across the street if you want to go.”

A smile of thanks broke over his face, and his long, thin fingers wound themselves tightly around her little hand. Nanny led him carefully, going slowly, and looking on every side so as to keep away from the

wagons, but with all her care a carriage driven rapidly came down upon them. Before she could pull her blind charge out of the way one of the horses had struck him causing him to fall and he pulled Nanny with him ; in her fright she had tightened her hold of him.

The fall threw them both in front of the carriage, and only that the driver pulled up the horses till they went back on their haunches there would have been a serious accident. Nanny, finding herself almost under the horse's feet screamed with fright, and neither she nor the blind man seemed able to get up ; but a number of persons rushed to their aid.

A lady and gentleman were in the carriage that caused the accident, and they looked out of the carriage window to see what was the matter. The lady leaned so far out she had a full view of Nanny Tavish in the arms of a workman who had picked her up.

"Oh, Edwin ; "she said, drawing back, "it is the washerwoman's little girl ; that dear little creature I've just been telling you about. I must get out and see how much she is hurt."

"I'll do it," said the gentleman, "you stay here, Cornelia," and opening the carriage door he sprang out.

As the accident had happened in the middle of the street all traffic had been stopped, but now that it was found the blind man and the little girl were not hurt, wagons moved on again, and the driver of the carriage so as not to block up the way, drove to the curb of the sidewalk ; there Nanny was taken and the blind man led, and there the gentleman followed.

"I am not hurt," said Nanny when she recovered from her fright sufficiently to speak, though she was still trembling ; then as the workman put her on her feet she looked about for her blind companion : she felt ashamed that in her own fright she had forgotten him.

“Where is he? the blind man?” she asked piteously, “Is he hurt?”

“No, little one; he’s safe; is he your father?” asked a kindly voice.

“No;” said another voice, “he says himself that the little girl is a stranger to him; she was leading him across the street.”

A murmur of admiration went up at this statement of Nanny’s kind action, and the gentleman from the carriage having just then reached her, he heard it; he also had heard the answer to the question.

“I think I know something of this child,” he said as a sort of explanation to the crowd who had made way for him.

“Is not your name, Nanny Tavish?” speaking to the girl.

“Yes sir;” she answered in wide-eyed wonder. Her wonder was taking the place of fright.

“My sister, Miss Ingoldsby, would like to see you,” he went on, “she is in the carriage that I am sorry to say caused the accident.”

Miss Ingoldsby! that name brought back all the strange, delightful things that had happened on Saturday, and a flood of color rushed into Nanny’s face; the instant before it had been very pale indeed.

She let the gentleman take her hand and she went with him to the carriage, the little crowd making respectful way for them. When she saw the sweet-faced lady, and when she asked so kindly if she had been hurt, Nanny forgot everything but the delight of that moment.

Miss Ingoldsby said to her brother that they should take Nanny home.

Nanny never had been in such a carriage before, and delight kept her blushing, while modesty kept her from lifting her eyes.

“Tell the driver to go to No.—Rivington Street,

Edwin," said his sister, and then she turned to the little girl, who sat beside her.

"That is where you live, is it not?"

Nanny answered without looking up:

"Yes ma'am."

As the carriage drove off, Miss Ingoldsby glanced at her brother; he nodded, and then he began to look very closely at Nanny; as she still kept her eyes down he could do so without being noticed by her. Not but that she wanted to look at him, this Edwin Miss Ingoldsby had spoken of on Saturday; but she had not the courage to lift her eyes. What she saw of him when he spoke to her first, was so little. It barely showed her a young man with a light complexion and hair the color of his sister's. Of one thing she was quite sure, he was not at all like the mysterious Egbert, and she was not going to give him a place in her little romance; but he *was* a gentleman; his manner, his voice, everything about him showed that, and alas! for Nanny's pride, in spite of what she had said about Helen Blun's pride, Nanny was proud now because these rich people took so much notice of her; she was even proudly thinking what the neighbors would say when they saw her get out of such an elegant carriage and if only Helen could be there to see her.

Miss Ingoldsby, in order to let her brother continue to watch the child, did not speak for a few seconds; then she said to Nanny:

"Tell us how the accident occurred and how you came to be leading the blind man across the street."

Nanny felt she ought to look up then, and to give as clear an account as she could from the time she saw the blind man groping with his stick to the moment that the horse struck him. Her manner of telling it charmed Miss Ingoldsby but she could not tell from the expression of her brother's face, what he thought of it, or what he thought of the little girl.

Nanny's home not being very distant the carriage

got there almost as soon as she had stopped speaking, and she was pleased to see a number of her big and little neighbors on the side walk, and the novel sight of such a fine carriage in that neighborhood, drew many more to the scene.

“Shall we go in with her to make her mother feel sure she is not hurt?” said Miss Ingoldsby, the tone of her voice showing that she wished to go.

Her brother replied with a smile :

“If you choose.”

So, to the further open mouthed surprise and admiration of the little crowd, the elegant lady and gentleman went with Nanny into the shabby looking house. Then perhaps as much shame as pride was in the child’s heart ; shame when she saw how Miss Ingoldsby had to lift her dainty skirts from contact with the soiled steps, and to keep them lifted in the bare, dusty hall.

Mrs. Tavish had finished assorting the clothes for the next day’s washing and she had put them tidily into a corner so that they would not be seen much by Nanny when she come back, for she knew how much better Nanny felt when every sign of the hateful washing was out of sight. She also had set the table for supper, and everything in the room had such a neat, tidy look one almost forgot how poor it was.

Miss Ingoldsby with a delicate shrinking from going in too suddenly on Mrs. Tavish, paused just outside the threshold while Nanny hurrying into the room, said almost breathlessly :

“Mamma, here are Miss Ingoldsby and her brother ; they brought me home in their carriage because they thought their carriage had hurt me ; but I wasn’t hurt mamma ; I only fell when their carriage knocked down a blind man——he didn’t know how to get across the street and I was taking him.”

There were so many feelings struggling in her little heart she hardly knew what to say first, and she

wanted to have her mother know at once how she had happened to come back in such company and that she was not hurt.

Mrs. Tavish's feelings were quite indescribable ; the child's looks assured her she was not hurt but the visitors in the doorway frightened her. After a moment, however, she recovered herself sufficiently to go to them and say :

"I don't know how to thank you, Miss Ingoldsby, and you Mr. Ingoldsby, for your kindness to Nanny. Will you come in?"

Miss Ingoldsby stepped within, her brother following, and they took the chairs Mrs. Tavish placed for them. The young lady began pleasantly :

"We are very glad your little girl was not hurt ; if she had been, it would have been truly in the interest of compassion for she was doing a most kind act, leading a poor blind man ; but that would not have softened the blow for you, Mrs. Tavish."

Mrs. Tavish made no reply, but Miss Ingoldsby hardly expected any for she went on almost without pausing,

"From Nanny's account, I judged, Mrs. Tavish, that you have trained your little daughter well and that she is good and obedient."

Mrs. Tavish's eyes seemed to fill, but of that the young lady could not be sure, for she had turned her head so that her face could not be well seen. But her voice trembled as she answered :

"It is not difficult to teach the young to be good, and I try to do as well as I can."

Miss Ingoldsby gave her brother a quick, questioning look, but he did not seem to notice it.

Nanny all this time was standing shyly by the table almost wondering if it were not a dream to have those elegant people actually sitting there in her poor home. Even yet she could not bring herself to lift her eyes to either of them, till Miss Ingoldsby said :

“Are you quite sure, Nanny, that you have recovered from your fright?”

Then Nanny raised her eyes for an instant and looked full into the young lady’s face, answering:

“Oh yes: I am not a bit frightened now.”

Mr. Ingoldsby rose, saying to his sister:

“I am afraid, Cornelia, that if we do not go at once, we shall miss the boat.”

Cornelia rose but with a manner that showed she was unwilling to leave so soon, and they both bade Nanny good bye, the young lady taking Nanny’s hand as she did so, but the gentleman only bowed; he did the same to Mrs. Tavish while his sister said:

“Be sure to bring Nanny with you to Staten Island on Saturday, when you bring the clothes, Mrs. Tavish.”

Both mother and daughter followed the visitors to the street door, and waited while they entered the carriage, which was by this time the object of admiring attention to nearly everybody in the neighborhood.

Nanny was so excited and delighted she could hardly get back to her wonted state of feeling; she could not talk enough about Miss Ingoldsby and her brother—their kindness, their elegance, how much Mr. Ingoldsby looked like his sister, her own visit to Staten Island on the coming Saturday, her renewed wonder about Egbert, but when she came to that her mother could bear no more; she exclaimed:

“If you talk so much about these strangers, Nanny, I shall begin to feel that you will get to think more of them than you do of me.”

“Oh, mamma! never, never!” and she sprang to her mother’s neck hugging her closely.

“Then don’t talk of them any more, dear.”

Nanny forced herself to be silent, but it was very hard, and Mrs. Tavish understanding that, asked about the blind man so as to divert the child’s

thoughts. That made the little girl reproach herself for having forgotten him.

"And he looked so poor, mamma," she said, tears filling her eyes, "but he wasn't begging, and they said he wasn't hurt, but oh, I wish I had thought of seeing him before I got into the carriage."

"I wish so too, dear, but don't trouble yourself about it now, and what did you do with the money for the soap?"

Nanny looked dismayed.

"I forgot all about it; I had it in my hand when I fell, and I must have lost it."

Mrs. Tavish looked a little bit dismayed also, for the price of the soap, small as it was, was a good deal where every cent was so hardly earned and had to be so carefully spent; but she said only:

"Well, don't mind about that either; it wasn't so very much to be sure."

But Nanny did mind about it, knowing the distress her mother often felt for the want of money, and her self reproach helped to turn her thoughts away from the Ingoldsbys; it helped her also to be willing to tell Helen Blun that she was sorry for having spoken in such a manner to her, and when she was going to bed and about to give her mother a good night kiss, she whispered:

"I shall say to Helen Blun to-morrow, mamma what you want me to say."

Mrs. Tavish smiled and kissed her; little did the child know what was passing in her mother's heart; little did she dream an hour later when she was fast asleep how her mother hung above her, crying softly to herself: but could Mrs. Tavish know what was at that very moment passing between Edwin Ingoldsby and his sister, her tears would have stopped flowing.

This gentleman was saying:

"It will be better for all of us, Cornelia, if you cease to make, or even to think any more of that

child ; I agree with you that she looks like Egbert, but such things often happen, and you must not tell Egbert anything about it."

"Oh, Edwin ! not to write to him at all about the little creature. I never knew you to object to anything I wanted to do before."

"Nor would I now, but that I see more clearly than you do what is best in this case. I heard you ask her mother to bring her here on Saturday. Should she do so, promise me that you will take no more than ordinary notice of the child."

"But that will be a cruel disappointment to the little girl."

"Not half so cruel as the course you would pursue would be to your family. Once for all, Cornelia," speaking very firmly, "you must promise me that you will do just as I wish in this case, and that whenever Egbert comes back, you will not say one word to him about this child. Do you promise?"

"Yes," she said very unwillingly, "but it is too bad when I have become so interested in her."

Her brother smiled.

CHAPTER X.

HELEN BLUN was in the most remote corner of the room, crying and shivering with fear, when her father came in. How horribly slow he seemed to be in shutting the door behind him and walking to the middle of the room where he called in a dreadful voice :

“Helen, come here.”

She obeyed, covering her face with her hands and beginning to sob. He took out his watch.

“I shall give you five minutes to stop crying.”

If there had only been the slightest tone in his voice to show that he pitied her even though he were going to punish her, it would have soothed her terror, and have given her courage to tell the whole story ; but there was nothing but that awful sternness which seemed to freeze her soul. After several efforts to stop crying, she managed to do so before the five minutes had quite passed.

“Now tell me every circumstance about that bonnet.”

The bonnet was lying on the table where she had thrown it savagely in full view of them both.

If only he would help her by a question, a pitying word, even a change of expression in his face, but he did not ; he seemed to her like some grim, awful being whose eyes when she dared to raise her own, were so firmly fixed they did not even wink.

With gasp, and pause, and hesitation she told how she came to promise to have her father buy a shaker

bonnet, that she took part of the change when she bought the trimming, and the lie she told her mother. Of her hardships in trying to hide the shaker she said nothing, but her father, recollecting Walter's remark at the table, and determined according to his strict sense of discipline to let nothing go unexplained, asked without a change either in the expression of his face, or the tone of his voice :

"What did your brother mean by saying you kept this bonnet under the bed?"

"I hid it under my bed and he and the rest of them found it, and—"

She stopped, for her answer was leading her into an account of how she got the shaker back from Walter.

"Go on," said her father, "I want a full account of everything that happened from the time you took the money to buy that bonnet, till you took the bonnet to school this morning."

She knew her father too well to think that, when he was angry as he was now, he would be satisfied with the questions he put to her; he would ask each one of her brothers and sisters, and should he find that she had left out anything that had taken place, her punishment would be double.

So, after another loud sob, which she tried in vain to keep down, she went on beginning with Saturday morning when Jane found the parcel under the bed, her bribe of the picture book to the little ones to keep them from finding the parcel, seeing it herself afterward on the broom in the yard, her threat to Walter to get it from him, and after that, how she threw it on the top of the wardrobe and went to sleep waking to find it on Lulu's head, and that part brought her to the terrible disclosure of having cut off one of her curls in order to save the bonnet a second time.

To almost any other father that tale, showing as it did all she had suffered from the ill-gotten bonnet,

would have brought pity even while it made punishment necessary, but to Mr. Blun it brought only anger. He had thought his "discipline," was enough to insure the morals of his family, and now to discover that, not alone was every rule of his "discipline" broken, but that falsehood, theft and disobedience were practiced in his household, was a dreadful blow. It never entered his mind that he ought to lead his child to sorrow for having done wrong, to make her feel, that while it was her duty to accept punishment, and his duty to give it, that he gave it in love and kindness and pity. His sole thought was that Helen *must* be punished so as to make it impossible for her ever again to be guilty of such conduct, and to satisfy his own aggrieved feelings.

"You have left out nothing," he asked, when she had finished, and she stood trembling before him.

"No, papa ; I've told you everything."

His left hand went up ; she knew what was coming ; he was going to count upon his fingers the different wicked things she had done, and beginning with the little finger he would reckon them till he came to the thumb ; and so he did.

He told off on his little finger with great emphasis both as to touch and tone, her first wrong step in making an unauthorized promise for him ; on the third finger her theft of the money, on the middle finger her purchase without any permission from her parents, on the fore finger her lie to her mother, on the thumb her slovenliness in putting anything under the bed, and then he had to begin at the little finger again, and by the time he reached the cutting of the curl he had managed to find so many wicked deeds that it required a third rotation of his fingers to number them all. Helen in her horror stricken suspense was looking at his fingers as if each one were a human being charging her with something.

“And since,” he went on, when at length he had finished the dreadful reckoning, “that shaker bonnet has been the cause of such temptation to you, that shaker bonnet must furnish your punishment. You shall wear it to school instead of the one you are accustomed to wear, and for one month you shall wear it to table at every meal; also, that you may have a still more lasting reminder of your many crimes you shall put on that bonnet now and come with me to my barber’s. I shall have him cut off your hair.”

“All my curls! oh, papa, don’t do that. I’ll never, never, never be so wicked again. Oh, papa, papa.”

The awful thought of having to lose her beautiful curls gave her courage to plead, and breaking once more into sobs she knelt at his feet and clasped his knees. But to all her entreaties he answered by taking out his watch, and saying:

“If within three minutes you are not ready to come with me, I shall have your head entirely shaved.”

She rose at once, put on the dreadful shaker, and with her eyes full of tears but saying no more, she went with him. He waited only to take his hat from the stand in the hall, not taking the slightest notice of his wife who hearing him and Helen descending the stairs had come out from the parlor where she had been waiting in angry suspense.

“Where are you going?” she asked sharply of her husband, but he made no answer, and Helen did not dare to say a word.

Mrs. Blun stood, staring after the pair as if she thought both of them had become insane; she even rushed to the steps to look after them, but that did not help her much. If it were not for the attention it would attract from the neighbors—being still daylight—she would have followed them for, never before had she been treated quite so discourteously by her husband, and she could not understand why Helen should wear that abominable bonnet.

She flitted from the parlor to the hall and from the hall to the parlor till they came back, and by that time the daylight had gone and the street lamps were lighted.

The shaker coming out so far over Helen's face did not let her mother see the tears that covered her face, and the long silk cape hid the fact that she had lost her curls.

"Go to bed at once, Helen," commanded her father, "and you, Mrs. Blun," speaking to his wife, "come into the parlor." They were then in the hall.

Helen, glad to go to her room so that she could sob out her very heart went as fast as she could up the stairs while Mrs. Blun, divided between indignation, wonder, and fear, went into the parlor.

Her wonder was increased when she saw that her husband carried an oblong shaped paper box, and it was increased still more when he uncovered the box and she saw a mass of soft shining golden curls.

"Do you know this hair, Mrs. Blun?" he asked, "it has just been cut from the head of your daughter, Helen."

"Oh, Elliott!" she almost shrieked, betrayed by her dismay into calling her husband by his first name,

"You haven't had Helen's hair cut off?"

"There is the proof that I have done so, Mrs. Blun, and now ring for Catharine and have her bring Lulu down here."

"Mr. Blun!"

Mrs. Blun had managed to recover herself.

"Are you out of your mind? Lulu is asleep; and what has *she* done that she is to be brought down here?"

"Mrs. Blun, as insanity was never in my family, I resent your charge, and I ask you again to ring for Catharine."

Mrs. Blun did so, more as a means to have the mystery explained, than from any sense of duty, and

in a few minutes Lulu, only partly awake was brought down in Catharine's arms. Her father took one of the curls from the box and held it up before her, asking sternly :

“What did you do with the curl like this, that Helen cut off for you on Saturday?”

His manner as much as his question awakened Lulu fully ; she felt that either she was found out, or that she was about to be found out, and she began to cry, hiding her face in Catharine's bosom. But all that did not help her ; her father ordered :

“Put her on her feet.”

Then he repeated his question, and Lulu with her fists in her eyes, said :

“I dess it wolloed into the puddin’.”

“You rolled it into the pudding, didn't you?”

“It wolloed in its own self out of my hand,” in her baby sharpness, making up her mind not to admit that she was guilty.

“Where were you when it rolled into the pudding?” asked her father.

“I was looking at it.”

“But where,” said her father, “in which room of the house were you?”

“Which woom?” she repeated, digging her fists still further into her eyes, and feeling that she was being most cruelly forced to tell on herself.

“I dess it was in a woom down tairs.”

“In which room down stairs?” asked Mr. Blun, while Mrs. Blun shrugging her shoulders said loud enough for her husband to hear :

“How ridiculous !”

He took no notice of her but waited for the child's answer.

Lulu was as much afraid of her father as her brothers and sisters were ; but for all that, sometimes she was bolder with him than any one of the others would dare to be ; this boldness came partly from the favor her cunning ways won for her, and

partly from a feeling that she was too little for her father to punish. Now, while he waited in stern silence for her to speak it came into her bright little mind to turn the tables upon him by trying to make a bargain with him as she had done with Helen. So she took her fists all at once out of her eyes, and looking up at him with such an arch expression in her own face it made it hard for Catharine not to laugh, she said with pert confidence :

“What ’ll’oo dive me if I tell’oo where I wos.”

But it did not change Mr. Blun, and his face looked just as stern as he answered :

“I’ll punish you when you tell me, because you did such a wicked thing, and I’ll give you a double punishment if you don’t tell me at once in which room of this house you were when you put that hair into the pudding.”

Finding that her little plan was of no use she put her fists again to her eyes and began to cry : Mrs. Blun in exasperated impatience said :

“Why don’t you get in a Judge and a jury to try the child ?”

But Mr. Blun, taking no notice of her remark, ordered Lulu to stop crying and to answer him.

The child’s fear of him since he was going to punish her in any case was now greater than ever, and she stopped crying and took her hands from her face, but as to telling him that she had taken the curl to the kitchen, she felt somehow that the longer she put that off the better it would be for her, so she said :

“When the turl went into the puddin’ its ownself, me fordot to look where I wos.”

Such an astounding lie as that was, and the ease with which she told it were more than even Mr. Blun could endure calmly. He caught Lulu by the ear and lifted her out of the room into the hall; her screams startled everybody in the house.

“Now,” he said, his face white with anger, “show

me the room where you put that hair into the pudding, and don't you make another sound."

Having no longer any hope that her tiny size would save her, she choked back everything but a sob, and toddled down before him to the kitchen; Mrs. Blun followed with angry mutterings, and even Catharine, drawn by her curiosity, brought up the rear.

Every servant in the house knew there was something disagreeable going on up stairs; unfortunately, disagreeable things happened very often up stairs, and the servants had a way of very quickly finding them out. This time they all knew from what Jane had told them of Lizzie Morrell's visit, about the shaker bonnet, but they did not know the punishment that had been given to Helen, nor did any of them except Catharine, know the cause of Lulu's screams. These had brought Cook from the kitchen range to the basement hall, and Jane from the china closet to the threshold of the dining room; but both went back at the sight of the procession coming down stairs.

"Go to the spot where you put the hair into the pudding," said Mr. Blun, when Lulu, having got into the kitchen looked about her in a scared manner. She toddled over to the table where she had stood when she mixed the curl with the batter.

"Now show how you did it."

But the child felt she must still stick to what she had said at first, so she repeated:

"The dish of puddin' wos here with a poon in it an' the turl jumped out of my hand onto the poon, and the poon went wound with the turl, till I couldn't see the turl any more."

Catharine found it very hard again to keep from laughing, while the cook, her mouth wide open from wonder felt all at once, that it was going to be shown how she had nothing to do with the hair in the pudding, and that without having told her own suspicions about Lulu; now, she could not help saying:

"She means the dish of batter that I had ready to bake on Saturday. It was on the table and after I mixed it I remember leaving the table spoon in it."

"That will do, then," said Mr. Blun, and Lulu all at once felt better; she was sure her father believed what she had told him, and that he would not punish her; she said almost gleefully:

"I tole you, papa, I didn't do it; it dot into the puddin' its own self."

But what was her dismay to hear her father say:

"That is a lie, and young as you are, you know it to be a lie. You put the hair into the pudding, and your punishment shall be to go to bed without your dinner for a week, to have no dessert of any kind for a month, and every day for five days to be shut up a quarter of an hour in a dark closet."

Mrs. Blun, angry beyond all control by this utter ignoring of her judgment in the punishment of the child, said:

"Couldn't you prescribe bread and water for her also, for the next six months, Mr. Blun?"

But, as before, he took no notice of her. He turned to Catharine who had not gone beyond the threshold and said:

"I shall depend upon you to see that my orders are strictly carried out."

"Yes sir," answered Catharine promptly, feeling that it was for her best interests to obey the master.

The master turned to the cook:

"Being cleared now from all blame about the pudding of Saturday night, if you choose to keep your place in my family, I shall be satisfied to have you do so."

The cook said:

"Very well, sir."

All this time Lulu was crying, but crying very softly, for she was afraid to cry aloud. The thought of being shut up in a dark closet was the most dreadful punishment of all, for like many children,

she had a violent terror of being left alone in the dark, and as a last plea when her father told Catharine to take her up to bed, she said piteously as she was going past him in Catharine's arms :

"Oh, papa ; the turl did do in its ownself to the puddin' ; I only had it in my hand."

Thus keeping up her lie made Mr. Blun more angry ; he did not think that he ought to try to get her to tell the truth, he only thought that it was all his wife's fault for not maintaining his discipline in the house ; that had she done so her children would not lie, nor disobey. He turned to her and said :

"Since our business in the kitchen is done, Mrs. Blun, we shall go to the parlor."

He led the way, and she followed, scowling at him, and she said as soon as they reached the parlor :

"You are worse than a savage, Mr. Blun. To think that you have actually cut off all Helen's beautiful hair. What a fright she must be !" and then in a sort of hysterical anger she laughed aloud.

She felt worse that Helen had lost her hair than that Helen had told a lie, and worse that she had to put off buying her lace than that Helen had dishonestly taken the dollar. With regard to Lulu's falsehood, she thought it showed the child to be bright and clever, and that if her husband were not a sort of bluebeard, he would have thought so too. Mr. Blun said with grim sternness :

"Hereafter, Mrs. Blun, I—" the "I" was so long drawn out, Mrs. Blun wondered when the next word would come— "shall see that there is no further violation of the discipline in my family ; my rules shall be obeyed by every one who dwells under my roof."

In order not to hear Mrs. Blun's answer he turned back to the hall, took his hat and went out.

"Discipline !" how Mrs. Blun hated the word even more than poor Miss Olden did. At that very moment Miss. Olden was getting ready a list of

questions in geography ; she had yielded to the temptation.

Shorn Helen did not dare to look at herself in the glass ; all that she did was to fling the shaker as far away as she could, to throw herself upon the bed, and hide her face in the pillow while she cried and sobbed pitifully. Not that she felt sorry for any of her wrong deeds ; she had no feelings but anger, hatred, and a sense of cruel treatment. She hated Nanny, she hated Lizzie, and she hated her father. Beside the blow to her pride by having her hair cut off, she had the horrible anticipation of meeting her schoolmates the next day without her curls, and wearing that disgusting shaker bonnet. If only she dared to do so, she would tear it into bits, but she did not know what other dreadful punishment her father might inflict upon her.

Oh, how miserable she was, and there was not one to comfort her ; that thought made her sob the more, and she hid her face so far in the pillow lest her sobs should be heard, that she did not know her mother had come in, till her name was called twice. Then she started and sat up in the bed.

The light from the street lamp was sufficient to show her plainly, and she did look strange and pitiable enough. Her hair by Mr. Blun's order had been cut so close to her head it made her face look much smaller and her dark blue eyes now swimming in tears much larger. Mrs. Blun thinking only how homely the child looked, never thought of pitying her.

"What a fright you are," she said, at which Helen sank down again on the bed, and hid her face in the pillow.

"I hope the next time you'll give me the correct change, and not make such trouble as this in the house—and now you had better undress or your father's delightful discipline may make him come up here to see if you have gone to bed."

And without a hint of pity, or comfort, or anything that might help poor Helen to better feelings, she left the room.

But what she said about the "delightful discipline" of Mr. Blun had its effect. Helen undressed and went to bed, and at length she fell asleep.

CHAPTER XI.

WHEN Helen awoke the next morning and thought of the mortification in store for her, she hated the very sunshine, and when it came to going down to breakfast with the shaker on, she burst into tears.

The children all wanted to laugh when they saw her seated at the table with the queer, poky looking bonnet on, except Walter and Lulu. Walter as kind hearted as he was mischievous, was sorry for his sister, and when he caught sight of her tear-stained face he gave Arden a sly, reproving kick for so much as smiling. Lulu was in such terror of the dark closet she was to go into that very day, she could see no amusement in the bonnet; the bonnet was the cause of her trouble.

When everybody was seated, Mr. Blun, in a very solemn manner told them all why Helen wore the shaker bonnet and then he made her take it off for a moment to let them see her other punishment.

Her strange appearance set the children to sly giggling again, but Walter having manfully made up his mind not only to keep from smiling himself, but to do what he could to keep the others from hurting his sister's feelings, kicked on both sides of him. His foot going further than he intended struck Lulu, she gave a howl that startled everybody and brought Mr. Blun to his feet.

"Walter ticked me," she said, wanting to explain immediately for fear she should be punished for

breaking so dreadfully the solemn silence of the breakfast table.

"I couldn't help it, papa," said Walter, darting a look at Lulu that told her he would give it to her by and by for that tattling.

Mr. Blun felt that this disturbance was surely due to his wife's want of discipline, and he turned to her and said :

"Mrs. Blun, for the future *will* you see that the decorum of meal times is not broken?"

"Do you expect me to go under the table and watch the children's legs, Mr. Blun?"

Her answer made most of the children want to titter aloud, but they were too much afraid of their father; he said very sternly :

"I expect you, Mrs. Blun, to so discipline your children that it will never occur to them to use their legs, or their arms, or any of their various organs in any way but the right way, or at any time but the right time."

After that the meal went on with its usual silence.

The walk to school that morning was the dreariest walk Helen Blun ever had taken, and it seemed to her as if she reached the school door all too soon, though she had not left home till the last minute so as not to have to meet the embarrassing remarks of the girls; by thus timing herself, her classmates would have formed on the line and there would not be much opportunity to speak to her.

She did think she should say, that, as the weather was getting so warm her father thought it well to have her hair cut, but Lizzie Morrell's visit to the house, which of course, Lizzie would tell about, might make the girls not quite believe that the weather was the cause of her short hair. So, not knowing what she should say, she went into the class room taking off the shaker almost on the threshold.

The girls had formed in line, and of course, when so formed it was against the rule to talk, but at sight

of Helen's head a murmur of astonishment and amusement went up from the whole class. There were two little girls who pitied Helen very much ; these were Lizzie Morrell and Nanny Tavish ; they both saw the signs of trouble in her face.

Nanny thought Helen must be ill, and in her pity she longed for recess so as to tell her she was sorry for what she had said the day before ; and as Helen herself wore the shaker to school, it made it easier for Nanny to speak to her. Lizzie Morrell thought that Helen's hair had been cut off, and that she wore the bonnet as punishment for something wrong she had done about the shaker ; also that her visit to Helen's home had a good deal to do with it, and she was very sorry for having made the visit. Her sorrow took away every feeling for Helen Blun but pity, and she was as ready to take her part if the girls should make fun of her, as she had been to take the part of Nanny Tavish.

Helen was sure that Lizzie would lose no opportunity of showing how glad she was to see her looking so odd, and all through the morning assembly she dreaded the return to the class room ; when she found that Lizzie only looked at her in the kindest manner it surprised her so much she almost forgot how wretched she felt. And Lizzie did not stop with kind looks ; while the class was ciphering, the girl next to Lizzie, seizing the opportunity when Miss Olden was looking at the slates of the girls on the opposite side of the room, wrote upon her slate :

“Don't Helen Blun look like a Scare-crow ?”

But Lizzie, to the girl's amazement, instead of smiling and nodding, or writing an answer in the affirmative on her own slate, burst out with :

“No, she doesn't look like a scare-crow no mor'n you do,” in her anger she had forgotten even to speak in a whisper.

Miss Olden, full of the coming examination was almost in a fever trying to go over a good many

studies in the time that was barely enough for one subject ; so that anything that would stop or delay her in her work by diverting the attention of the class was particularly irritating. Recognizing Lizzie's voice, she turned and said sharply :

“Lizzie Morrell go to the front of the room, and do not take your seat with the class all day.”

Thus, poor Lizzie was again in disgrace, but this time she did not care very much, beyond feeling angry with Miss Olden. She put her slate on her arm and took her time in such an amusing manner to get to the front of the room that it was fun for the girls just to watch her : but Miss Olden was looking at the slates again and she did not see her.

In the yard at recess, Helen received more comfort that she did not expect. Nanny Tavish went bravely up to her, and said loud enough for all the girls in the vicinity to hear :

“I am sorry, Helen, that I spoke to you so rudely yesterday ; it was very kind of you to bring a shaker for me, and I thank you just the same as if I had taken it, but of course, I couldn't take it,” and then she smiled and turned away to another part of the yard.

That speech in addition to what Lizzie Morrell had said to the girl who had written that Helen looked like a scarecrow prevented the girls from making any more fun of Helen, or saying anything to her about having to wear the shaker herself : and as soon as Helen found out all that, she felt just as proud and superior as ever ; she even said to her particular friends in the class :

“I just thought I'd wear the shaker myself ; it is new, you know, and it wouldn't be right to let it go to waste.”

“Yes,” answered one of the girls, “and it comes in first rate for you, now ; it doesn't show that your hair is cut off.”

“Oh, I don't care for that,” said Helen, speaking with a very high air of contempt.

"I'm real glad my hair is cut off," then, all at once having a new thought, she went on :

"It was such a trouble, you know, those long curls—I had to brush and brush them till my arms ached."

Most of the girls beleived her, but when Lizzie Morrell heard it she smiled ; it was a smile that showed she did not believe a word of it, but she did not say anything. To poor Helen herself, the lie did not bring any pleasure ; it only sank her deeper in a miserable knowledge of her wickedness.

That afternoon, when Miss Olden tried for the first time to drill the class in the geography questions for Examination, it seemed to her as if Helen Blun's stupidity, Lizzie Morrell's indifference, and the carelessness of most of the other girl's would drive her frantic. She had arranged the girls so that the brighter ones did not stand beside each other, but were scattered along the line ready to cover up any failure that might occur, and Helen Blun who was generally one of these bright girls, was given a place of honor. Then Miss Olden numbered each girl, and after that she went on to give from a written list the questions in geography.

She did not tell the class why she was doing this, and though most of the girls were surprised, no one ventured to ask anything about it. Miss Olden intended to study the questions herself, and to study them in their order, just as they were numbered, the one at the head of the list first, the next one, second, and so on, till she should know them all, and should be able to give them without the paper ; so, she said to the class before beginning :

"I want each girl to remember the answer that I tell her to give to my question, and every time this week that we have a geography lesson. she is to give me that same answer, for I shall ask her the same question I am going to ask her now. Do you understand ?"

They answered :

"Yes ma'am," most of them at the same time looking pleased, for that plan of geography for the week was going to save them the trouble of studying.

Then Miss Olden went on with her drill repeating the answer she wanted, and at the end of a tiresome, spiritless hour, she asked Helen Blun:

"What is the government of the United States?"

Helen answered in a loud voice:

"It's a constitutional monarchy governed by one man and his ministers."

Miss Olden lost all patience; she struck the table with her copy of questions, and said:

"Helen Blun, did you lose your brains when your hair was cut off?"

That caused a shout of laughter from the class, and the laughter was such a happy change from what had gone before it, that they kept it up even after Miss Olden had struck the table with the ruler, and called "silence."

When it at last subsided, Lizzie Morrell renewed it again by laughing herself in such a ludicrous manner that the class shouted louder than before, and Miss Amer on the platform talking to one of the trustees, hearing the laughter three distinct times, excused herself hurriedly, and went to the class room. Throwing open the door she stood in all the awful dignity of a Principal, and a Principal who was tall, masculine looking, and who wore a stiff satin dress. She wanted to know the cause of such disorder. Her question was put to the startled teacher, and almost every girl felt that the teacher would be blamed much more than the class.

Poor Miss Olden's red, scared looking face helped to make them think so, and she stammered that something had been said that made the girls laugh.

"Then you must be careful for the future to avoid everything of that kind," said Miss Amer severely, and looking over the crooked line of girls

—they had tried to relieve the tiresomeness of saying the same thing over and over by standing as much out of a straight line as possible.

“What are they doing?” Miss Amer asked.

“I was hearing some questions in geography,” Miss Olden answered, her knees shaking lest Miss Amer should inquire further, and so discover the truth about the questions : but the Principal merely said :

“Have them stand in order, and not lean on the desks, nor against the wall in that manner.”

Then, to the relief of everybody she went out.

Poor Miss Olden ! she, as well as Helen Blun, began to feel that the way of the wrong doer was hard.” She had gone against her conscience in this matter of geography, and now she was suffering for it, in her fear, her guilt, and the loss of her own self respect. She knew it would be better to let the whole class fail than to take such dishonest means to have them do well, but, all that Miss Robson had said came back to her mind ; then in addition, the time was so short to prepare her pupils in geography when there were so many other studies. And it being likely the Superintendent would examine in the other studies himself, geography was the only one that gave her such an opportunity. She was anxious to have her class do well ; if she received a good mark for the Examination it would insure her own promotion, and now the temptation again carried the day. When she went home that afternoon it was to adhere to her plan of studying her list of questions.

CHAPTER XII.

THE next morning when the school was assembled Miss Amer announced the Examination from the platform. In those days such Examinations were held in the main room, and they formed a sort of public exhibition as well, so Miss Amer also told the children they might invite their parents.

Nanny Tavish longed for school to be dismissed so she could tell her good news, and she was delighted when her mother said :

“I shall manage somehow, so as to go dear ; even if I have to work all night to make up for it.”

Helen Blun said nothing about the invitation at her home ; if her father should accept it, she would be frightened out of everything she knew. and her mother cared too little how Helen was getting on in school for Helen to take the trouble to invite her. Lizzie Morrell of course, told her uncle all about it, and Lizzie almost cried to think he was not able to go. Mrs. Morrell from the next room heard what they were saying :

“What’s that, Lizzie ?” she said, “examination at the school, and the parents of the children can go to see it. Is that what you’re telling ?”

“Yes ;” said Lizzie, not wanting to answer, but doing so because Dad made a sign to her to do so.

“Then, so long as your uncle can’t go,” said Mrs. Morrell, “I’ll go. though you didn’t have the manners to ask me ; it’ll be proper and perlite for some

one as has the charge of you to go to see how you're gettin' along, Lizzie; I haven't much book learnin' myself, but I'll know at the examination if you're paying proper attention to your reading, and your spelling, and the like."

Lizzie looked dismayed, but her uncle smiled, and whispered:

"Let her have her way; don't mind for my sake."

Even Lizzie had to laugh when after a little the parrot repeated:

"Your spelling and the like."

The great day arrived, and every scholar came to school in either an entirely new dress, or with the old one so clean and trim it looked almost as good as the new ones. There had been plenty of soap used on every face, and short hair and long hair, and curly hair and straight hair had been brushed and arranged till it would have been hard to pick out one untidy head in the whole school. The teachers also wore their best dresses, and in most cases had given to them a touch of summer beauty by wearing flowers in their belts or at their breasts.

On the platform Miss Amer looking more like a severe school mistress than ever, was giving the official welcome to the trustees, and to the friends of the pupils. Among those who came early and so got seats on the platform, were Mrs. Morrell and Mrs. Tavish, and they happened to sit next to each other.

Mrs. Morrell wore a new bright yellow French lawn dress made with a spencer waist, and it showed Mrs. Morrell's large size as nothing else would have done. On her arm, she had a white *crepe* shawl, Bartholomew's present when they were married, and only worn on state occasions like the present. Her bonnet had pink trimmings and it was so small it looked as if it were perched on the top of her head. Her large round face was an amusing sight under such a little, showy bonnet, and as she sat there on one of the front

seats of the platform every eye seemed directed toward her.

But Mrs. Morrell herself, felt very happy; nor was she at all abashed by the learning and refinement about her. Not knowing who Mrs. Tavish was she did not give her a second look, but Mrs. Tavish recognized Mrs. Morrell, and she could not help smiling a little at the vulgar taste shown in Mrs. Morrell's dress.

Her own dress was a black one that had done duty for seven years, but it had been so neatly kept, it looked well still; she also wore a black shawl, and a black straw bonnet trimmed very simply with black ribbon.

The classes marched from their rooms in perfect order, each girl feeling that she must do her best.

Miss Olden was so nervous that her cheeks were red and hot, and her hands and feet were cold. Because of the desire of each girl to behave well, she did not have to pay much attention to them, and she was very thankful.

To carry out her plan about the geography, her class in the large room was seated in the same order that it had been seated in the class room for more than a week.

At former examinations, each girl when her turn came to be examined stood up on the seat she occupied, and Miss Olden thought the same arrangement would prevail at this one.

There were no absences, and every pupil seemed eager to do her very best both as to order and scholarship.

The "First Class" which was also the highest, and which had in it girls much larger and older than Nanny and her classmates, was examined first; but Miss Tibbetty was the teacher of the First Class, and Miss Tibbetty having taught for a great many years knew just how to give her orders.

Each girl mounted her bench with great self-pos-

session, showing that she was quite ready for any test, and when Superintendent Jonas said he would like a little arithmetic, Miss Tibbetty smiled sweetly, and put up her finger to the class. Each girl stooped, and stooping waited for another sign from Miss Tibbetty; she gave it by means of her finger again, and out of the desks came the slates without a sound, and all at the same moment.

Still another sign with Miss Tibbetty's right hand fore finger, and each girl's arms were folded over her slate, and their owners were standing like a row of statues. A murmur of admiration went up from the audience.

Miss Tibbetty must have known all the little secrets connected with a successful examination for her class came off with such flying colors in the very first quarter of an hour, that the Superintendent said he was quite satisfied, and the "Second Class" was told to mount the benches.

The teacher of the Second Class was neither so old, nor so experienced in examinations as Miss Tibbetty was, so her class was not let off so quickly, but it did well, and the "Third Class," taught by Miss Robson was called.

Miss Olden envied the easy, self-possessed manner with which Miss Robson walked to a place several feet in front of her class so that she might be seen as well as heard, while she gave her orders; and Miss Olden envied Miss Robson still more when she heard her say in a loud, pleasant voice:

"Will you have Arithmetic first, Mr. Jonas?"

"Well, I don't care if I do;" cried the gentleman, "let's have a little Arithmetic, Miss Robson, to see what these girls can do in the way of reckoning up milliner's and dressmaker's bills. You give them a sum, Miss Robson."

Miss Robson gave them a sum which they did so quickly and so correctly, that Mr. Jonas gave them another; that, they did not do so quickly, nor so

correctly ; but Miss Robson continued to look so self-possessed, and so pleased that the girls themselves thought they must be doing very well.

Then, Mr. Jonas examined them in oral spelling, and as only one girl failed, he thought their excellent spelling atoned somewhat for the suspicious want of promptness and accuracy they showed in working out the sum he had given them.

“Now, Miss Robson,” he said, “give them a few questions in grammar,” and the shrewd young lady feeling that she had nearly made a blunder in the arithmetic by giving them an example they had done three times the day before, began to examine in grammar with great slowness, as if she were trying to think what questions to give. But that did not deceive Miss Olden :

She said to herself :

“Miss Robson has drilled her class in every one of those questions, the same as I have done in geography.”

But no suspicion of that seemed to dawn on anybody else’s mind, and Miss Robson was told that would do. She signed to her class to be seated, and she went back to her own place as if she were very much pleased.

The “Fourth Class” was called, and Miss Olden’s heart began to beat like a trip hammer ; indeed it seemed to stop beating altogether when, just as she had given the signal to her class to stand, Miss Amer said :

“Miss Olden, bring your class to the front row of benches ; the First Class will change seats with it for the present.”

That order quite confused Miss Olden, nervous as she was already. She did not even think to have her class forward in such order as would bring the girls to the same numbered places as those they had left ; so each scholar marched in the order most convenient to herself, and by the time the whole

class was standing on the front row of benches each girl was in a different place.

To complete Miss Olden's dismay her voice was so low when she spoke, Miss Amer asked her to stand on the lower step of the platform.

That position enabled everybody to see her so well she thought she should faint, but she did not, and by trying to look alone at her class, she managed not to betray her feelings. She hoped with all her heart that Mr. Jonas would begin the examination so as to give her time to compose herself, but what was her horror to hear him say :

"I think we shall have a little geography in this class. Give them a few questions, Miss Olden."

Alas, for the day on which Miss Olden took the advice of Miss Robson ; not a question of all that she had so carefully written, and so laboriously committed to memory, could she think of ; she could think of nothing but questions which she knew no one in her class could answer, questions that she had never asked them. Her cheeks were blazing, but her hands and feet were as cold as those of a corpse ; she could feel the fans in the audience playing about her, and she knew everybody was waiting for her to begin. The members of her own class were waiting in breathless expectation.

Oh, that horrible wait ! no prisoner about to be sentenced could have suffered more, and it was like the awful moment when the drop falls, when at length she managed to say :

"In what country do we live ?"

"Africa," quickly answered the girl at the head of the line whose question according to Miss Olden's plan in the class room should have been,

"In what country is the Great Desert ?"

"Next," said Miss Olden, and the next girl utterly confused by a question so different from that which had been drilled into her for a whole week, said at a venture :

"Asia."

“Next,” again said Miss Olden, her brain beginning to beat as well as her heart.

“Australia,” was the answer, and then Superintendent Jonas out of pity for the teacher, and to do something to change the solemn looks of the audience, said :

“What little girl in the class can tell the country she lives in ?”

He spoke so cheerfully it seemed to cover a little the failures thus far, and even to make the poor teacher feel a little better.

Nanny Tavish’s hand went up at once: a few others followed but they went up so slowly that their owners did not seem to be quite sure, and Mr. Jonas told Nanny to answer.

“We live in the United States of North America,” she said in her clear little voice, and blushing while she spoke; her mother blushed also with delight and pride.

“That is right, my bright little girl, so we do,” said Mr. Jonas, rubbing his hands together in a hearty way, and looking round at the audience as much as to say :

“There isn’t going to be any bad work there; just give ’em time and they’ll come out all right,” and then he went on so as to make stronger the good impression he thought he had given to everybody.

“Of course we live right here in the great United States of North America; not in Africa, not in Asia, but here, right here,” saying the last words as if he expected some one to contradict him: as nobody did, he said to Miss Olden :

“Give ’em some more questions, Miss Olden: they’ll come out all right.”

His hopeful tone made Miss Olden feel so much better that the questions she had forgotten came back to her; but since the girl’s places were changed it would be no use to give the questions in the order

she had drilled them in the class room ; so she struck out anywhere, asking :

“What is geography?”

The girl to whom this question was put, had told every day for over a week what an island was, so she answered now :

“Geography is a portion of land, big or little, entirely surrounded by water.”

That was a dreadful blunder ; Superintendent Jonas felt it to be a sort of breaking of his promise that the class would do well if only time enough were given it, and he said in a low tone to Miss Olden :

“Perhaps she didn’t understand your question ; ask it again.”

Miss Olden did so, but she was told a second time that geography was “a portion of land, big or little, entirely surrounded by water.”

She passed the question to the next girl ; the next girl had told for a week what a volcano was, so she replied that :

“Geography sent forth smoke and ashes, and people living under it sometimes had to move.”

Mr. Jonas began to feel more disturbed, but with a feeling of manhood he came once more to Miss Olden’s aid : anybody could see now she was dreadfully worked up.

“What little girl in the class can tell us what geography is?” he asked, trying to speak as cheerfully as he did before, but everybody felt that he had lost much of his own hopefulness.

A few hands were raised, Nanny Tavish’s and Helen Blun’s among the others. The Superintendent, however, felt more sure of the bright little girl who had answered before, so he called on Nanny, and once more her clear voice was heard without trip, or pause ; she even added more from her own study than Miss Olden had taught.

That brought back the smile to Mr. Jonas’ face,

and again he rubbed his hands together, and said, looking round at the audience :

“They’ve been taught it ; that bright little girl shows they have, and we’ll get ’em all right yet. Go ahead, Miss Olden, and ask ’em easy questions ; that about geography was rather puzzling for such little folks.”

Mrs. Tavish in her fond pride whispered impulsively to Mrs. Morrell :

“That is my child.”

Mrs. Morrell was not at all pleased to be told that, and she grunted, just to show that she heard the whisper but that was all. She was angry that Lizzie did not carry off some of the honors, and she felt somehow as if sitting beside the mother of the brightest child in the class took away something from her own fine clothes.

The class itself, in spite of all that the Superintendent did to encourage it, felt as if it were doing very badly, and Miss Olden’s own manner helped that feeling ; then, the older girls were beginning to show anger at not being asked the proper questions.

To the miserable teacher the order to give easy questions was as hard as if she had been told to give difficult ones ; Miss Olden had gone against her conscience, and it had turned to her own punishment.

With a forlorn hope that the question she was going to put, might be answered correctly since it was Helen Blun’s turn, she asked in a trembling voice :

“What is the good of mountains ?”

“They’re good if people have goats to let them climb up on them,” replied Helen, not knowing of what earthly use mountains were, further than being mountains, but recollecting that in the picture book torn by her mischievous brothers and sisters, there had been a picture of some goats on a hill.

That answer made the audience titter, and Superintendent Jones, too much discouraged to try to

cover up this blunder, was silent ; Miss Olden, finding no one was going to help her, called on those who knew the correct answer to raise their hands. Only three hands responded, Nanny Tavish's, Lizzie Morrell's, and the girl to whom the question belonged.

Miss Olden called on Nanny, but Nanny did not get an opportunity to answer, for Mrs. Morrell who could not contain her anger, that Lizzie was not asked, sprang up and fairly shouted :

"Since the teacher won't give you the chance, Lizzie, answer yourself ; show her and the rest of them you're not a numbskull——of course you know the good of mountains."

Great amusement followed the amazement caused by this speech, and even the scholars laughed. As for Lizzie, she buried her face in her hands to shut out the dreadful sight.

Superintendent Jonas finding that the woman meant to continue standing, and to go on talking, said :

"Sit down, Madame, and let the exercises go on."

"No sir : I'll not sit down till there's fair play at your examination. Tell the teacher there not to be giving all the questions to one child ; she ought to be ashamed of herself showing such partiality."

By this time the amusement and curiosity of the teachers had made them forget their classes, and these were twisting in their seats, stretching their necks, laughing, and even whispering, while the audience forgetting all decorum, had risen, and everybody was struggling for a better sight of Mrs. Morrell ; it had been easy enough to hear her.

Miss Amer had to touch the little hand bell on the desk several times before she could bring the school to order, and Superintendent Jonas told Miss Olden to remove her class. Then, and then only, did Mrs. Morrell sit down, but she did so, very well satisfied with herself.

The examination of the other classes was made very quickly, either because Superintendent Jonas did not recover his spirits, or that he was afraid of the stout lady in yellow, and the children were sent to their class rooms thence to be dismissed for the day.

The moment Miss Olden was alone with her pupils, she had to hear a perfect babel of angry complaints.

"You told us you would ask us the questions we studied in the class room."

"You gave my question to Helen Blun."

"You asked us questions we never had."

"I don't care! it wasn't fair anyhow."

"What's the use of studying, if you're going to be examined that way?"

And a score of like speeches to all of which Miss Olden very red, and trembling, only replied:

"Hush!"

"Take your seats."

She had not spirit enough left to threaten loss of marks or keeping in after school.

The only ones who had nothing to say were Nanny, Helen and Lizzie. Nanny of course, had little need to say anything; she had covered herself with credit, and she knew that this must have delighted her mother.

Helen had no wish to say anything as her failure was not seen by anybody from home, and alas! she was secretly very glad that Lizzie Morrell had been made so much ashamed; this she felt to be a sort of revenge for what Lizzie had caused her to suffer.

Lizzie did not speak because she was too broken hearted to say a word. She knew, that only because the girls had so much to complain about just now, they would have turned upon her with speeches about her aunt, and she was sure that every scholar and every teacher in the school knew who was the big, vulgar looking woman who had spoken out at the examination. She felt if it were not for Dad she

would run away ; it was so dreadful never to know when she was going to be mortified by that horrible woman. She did not hear the confusion of tongues about her ; her head sank lower and lower on the desk till it was lying upon it with her arm thrown over it, and her eyes and her mouth shut tightly, in order to choke back her tears.

Nanny Tavish watched Lizzie ; from her own sensitiveness she judged what was the matter, and as the girls were boldly leaving their seats and going to any part of the room they wished without asking permission, she felt as if she too might leave her seat in order to go to Lizzie : but her habit of obedience was too strong ; she had broken it but once in the class, the occasion when she had dared to comfort Lizzie. Now she asked Miss Olden if she could rise.

Miss Olden was surprised that any one should think of asking permission to do anything, when every girl in the room was doing just as she pleased regardless of the presence of the teacher, and the poor teacher had no spirit even to try to stop the disorder. Of course she said

“ Yes,” to Nanny, but at the same time she muttered in a half mocking way to herself :

“ You are entirely too good for this wicked world.”

Miss Olden was in just that state of mind from shame and failure as to be almost angry at any virtue in another. She watched Nanny cross the room, then she tried to restore order by shouting :

“ Girls, take your seats, and the monitress give out the clothing.”

The monitress went to the closet and began at once to throw the various articles of wardrobe to their owners.

Nanny Tavish bent down to Lizzie Morrell and whispered :

“ Are you sick, Lizzie ?”

The big black eyes opened quickly with a flash

that spoke of anger, but the flash went out at sight of the sympathy in the face of Nanny, and she said softly :

“ No ; I am not sick.”

Then Nanny wanted to say something more ; something to comfort the little girl for the shame she had suffered, but she felt perhaps as if it might be better not, and she just bent down and kissed her ; then she glided back to her seat.

Nanny's silence was better than anything she could have said, for Lizzie was so sore on the subject of Mrs. Morrell that she could not have borne a word.

But Nanny's kiss seemed like the touch of an angel, and it saved the child from giving way altogether to thoughts of bitterness and hatred.

The disorderly class at length was ready to go home, but even when every girl had departed, Miss Olden seemed still to hear their angry mutterings. She was thankful to be alone and she sank into her chair and covered her face with her hands.

To think that her class had been examined only in that wretched geography ; not a question had been asked which would have shown the really faithful and conscientious work she had done in the other studies, and Miss Robson, who she was sure had not alone drilled her class in prepared geography questions, but prepared grammar questions as well, had come off with flying colors. If it had not been for Miss Robson she would not have thought of doing such a dishonest thing, and she would not now be disgraced in the eyes of everybody by the failure of her class. Poor Miss Olden ! like most people who give way to temptation, she put the whole blame on the one who tempted her, and so she said to Miss Robson who came in at that moment :

“ It is all your fault that my class did so badly.”

“ *My* fault !” Miss Robson replied, in angry surprise.

"Yes, your fault ; if I had not adopted your plan with those questions, my class would have done as well as anybody's."

Miss Robson drew herself up and said very coldly :

"I don't understand, Miss Olden, how I am to blame for the failure of your class."

"If I had not drilled my class in prepared questions as you told me to do, they and I would not be confused when they had to change their seats for the examination, and they would not have failed ; that is all."

"Drilled your class in prepared questions, as I *told* you to do," said Miss Robson, this time with such a very angry manner that it rather scared Miss Olden.

"Do I understand you, Miss Olden, to say that *I* told you to drill your class in prepared questions?"

Miss Robson brought her eyebrows together with a very severe look.

"I do not mean of course, that you *told* me to do it," Miss Olden stammered, "but you spoke of the plan, and, then——" getting courage to speak more plainly—"you know *you* prepared all the questions for your own class ; the grammar as well as the geography."

"Miss Olden!"

Miss Olden fairly started at the tone in which her name was called ; it was so loud, so decided, and so very angry.

"What *I* have done or have not done in *my* class is no concern of yours, and don't you dare to say again that I told you to take a plan of drill ; If I gave you a hint in kindness and you were too stupid to act upon it correctly don't go putting the fault of your stupidity on any one else's shoulders. Henceforth, I shall know enough to keep my advice to myself."

She flounced out of the room leaving Miss Olden

more wretched than she had been before. She sank again into her chair wondering if she took some light work at domestic service if it would not be better; in that position she would have but her mistress to fear; in this one she had Principal, Vice Principal, School officers, The Board of Education, and parents to dread.

The other teachers flocked in to sympathize with, and to comfort her; all except Miss Amer and Miss Tibbetty.

Miss Tibbetty was too conscientiously careful of the welfare of the school to give sympathy to any teacher whose class could fail so shamefully, and Miss Amer was too busy in showing the final courtesies to the visitors, to think of seeing Miss Olden yet; indeed, as her interview with that young lady would be a lengthy one, it seemed better to defer it till the next day.

But the young teachers who were in Miss Olden's room were full of sincere pity, and they gathered about the poor young woman and tried to comfort her.

"It was enough to confuse anybody, the way the first girl answered," said one.

"And then of course, like a flock of sheep, the rest of the class had to follow suit, and answer wrong," said a second.

"But never mind," said a third, "everybody in the school knows how hard you work."

The last remark proved to Miss Olden how little her companions dreamed of the unfair means she had used, and she burst out crying. That of course made the young things pity her still more, and one of them seating herself on the table drew Miss Olden's head to her breast; another stroked her hair, and a third said cheerfully:

"Never mind, dearie; it will be all the same a hundred years from now."

CHAPTER XIII.

OLEANDER THIMIG, standing as usual in the doorway of the coffin shop saw Mrs. Morrell returning from the examination.

He was afraid since that dreadful Saturday, to have her see him, and he ran to the rear part of the shop ; but when he thought she had passed he came out to look after her.

He never had seen her so gayly dressed before and she made him think of one of the great sunflowers in his grandfather's garden in the country.

Mrs. Morrell walked very slowly as if she desired to show herself, and she nodded with delighted pride to the neighbors she happened to meet. As Thimig watched the firm even step of her great flat feet, he said sadly to himself :

“There aint much chance of anybody puttin’ her in a coffin.”

He watched her till she went into the house, and then he took his place again in the doorway. He had been thinking of Lizzie before Mrs. Morrell came along, and he began to think of her again. He felt very sore about the trouble she had brought upon him, but he cared so much for her he could not bear not to be good friends. Since that Saturday they had not spoken to each other. He wondered now how he could show her that he wanted to “make up,” and just then he saw her coming. She was walking quickly and looking on every side of her.

"Lizzie," he called, and she stopped, but she looked as if she did not want to do so.

"Mrs. Morrell just went into the house; she had on a yaller dress."

Lizzie felt and looked relieved; all the way home she had been expecting to find Mrs. Morrell waiting for her, and had been carefully looking on every side fearing to see that dreadful yellow figure.

She was passing on, but Thimig could not let her go without getting some comfort for himself:

"You aint mad with me any longer, Lizzie, are you? I aint mad, and I want to be glad with you now, if you'll let me."

Lizzie stood and looked up into his stupid face feeling that whatever cause he had for being angry with her she certainly had none for being displeased with him, and he seemed to her as she looked at him like some poor animal that she ought to be kind to.

"No, I'm not mad," she said, pleasantly, "and I'm sorry Oleander for getting you treated that way by Mrs. Morrell, I shouldn't have put that order on the slate."

"Don't you never think another thing about that, Lizzie," he replied with a beaming face:

"Taint no matter to anybody," he went on, "and if ever you want anything done Lizzie, anything as'll make you feel better anyway, you just count on Oleander Thimig."

"Thank you," said his companion, not caring enough to wonder if he thought she might want to leave another order for a coffin for Mrs. Morrell. Then she hastened from him, and he whistled cheerfully as once more he leaned against the door post.

Mrs. Morrell still in the glory of her yellow dress, was giving to her husband an account of all that happened when Lizzie came in.

"There she is herself and she'll tell you it is just as I am telling it," she said, as she saw the child.

“Not a chance would they give her to speak but every question was put to just one little girl, and if Lizzie had a grain of the spirit of the Morrells in her, she’d have answered anyway, for any dunce would have known the good of a mountain—what good is it but to look at the country from the top of it. But I didn’t let it go with them ; I got up and told them what I thought of the favor the teacher was showing.”

“Oh, Maria ! you didn’t make a scene, surely,” said Mr. Morrell in dismay.

“Yes she did make a scene,” burst from Lizzie who was not able to keep still, “and I don’t want ever to show my face there again, for everybody in the whole school knows it’s my uncle’s wife that got up and spoke out in that awful way, and they’ll all be talking about it, and I don’t want to see any of them any more as long as I live.”

“Well, was there ever the like of that ?” said Mrs. Morrell, very much surprised.

“But, Maria ; you shouldn’t have made a show of yourself,” said Mr. Morrell, looking as if it were very hard for him just now to have his usual patience with human nature.

“A show of myself ! and is that what I get for taking the part of your brother’s child ; it’s well she calls me her uncle’s wife ; but, Bartholomew Mortimer Morrell,” she went on, “the day’ll come, maybe, when you’ll wish she was nothing to you—a show of myself, indeed !”

With this the irate woman went out to the kitchen banging every door behind her, while Lizzie with a burst of tears at so cruel a prediction, threw her arms round her uncle’s neck, and sobbed :

“You don’t believe her, Dad ? you’ll never be sorry that you’re my uncle.”

He replied :

“Never !”

“And you won’t ask me to go back there to

school, Dad? I can't, oh, I can't face all the girls after the way she got up before everybody to-day."

Mr. Morrell did not have anything to say to that; instead, he kissed the little girl, and kept his face against her own till he thought she had become quieter; then he remarked very softly lest his wife should hear:

"The doctor was here to-day, Lizzie, while Maria was out; she didn't think he'd come till to-morrow, and I havn't told her yet. He gave me so much hope of getting quite well after a little, that I've been thinking."

Lizzie lifted her face from his cheek and looked at him full of joyful expectation.

"Yes, I've been thinking," he went on, "thinking that we might move away from this neighborhood just as soon as the rheumatism leaves me, and thinking to send you, Lizzie, to some drawing school where you'll learn how to make pictures."

Lizzie in her delight hugged him so tightly he could hardly breathe for a moment; then, all at once, a fear clouded her joy.

"You don't mean to send me away; away somewhere where I couldn't see you every day?"

"No, little 'un; I could hardly do that; but I mean to have you go somewhere almost every day, perhaps in the afternoons so you won't lose your other lessons. You haven't done any of your pictures since Maria upset your room so, have you?"

"No; I felt it wasn't any use: I couldn't know when she'd tear up things again, and——" she stopped suddenly, for it just then came to her how she had made up her mind not to tell him that she was saving for something else the money he gave her to buy drawing cards and crayons.

But her uncle curious to know what made her pause, asked with a smile:

"And what?"

"Something I don't want to tell you," she answered vexed with herself for not having been more on her guard.

"What, secrets? I thought you had no secrets from Dad."

"And I haven't," she said, not able to bear his tone; it seemed to imply he felt hurt that she should keep anything from him, and so she told him all.

He knew from what she had told him before, that the fruit woman had given Lizzie some breakfast, and he was touched now to find that the little girl had not forgotten the kindness; that she had been saving every cent to pay for the breakfast.

"You need not have done that, Lizzie," he said, "if you had told me, I would have given you money for the woman; this very afternoon, if you like, you can take a dollar to her and tell her that your uncle sends it to thank her for her kindness to you."

"Oh, Dad! what shall I ever do for you? you are so good."

He smiled, saying:

"What you can do for me, little'un, will be very hard for you to do."

"I don't care; I'll do it; for oh, Dad, when I think of you, things don't seem to be so hard to do."

"Well, then, try not to mind about Maria, and act towards her as gently as you can, for Maria's a good woman, Lizzie, only she's so quick."

"Yes, Dad; I'll do that, and when I feel like getting mad at her, I'll hold my tongue between my teeth, and then I *can't* speak."

"But what about going back to school? it's the only school that's near, and I feel better not to have you far off through the day."

Lizzie looked sad; but her love for her uncle made her say at length:

"I'll go back, and if the girls say anything about what happened to-day, I won't answer them,—if I can help it."

Mrs. Morrell had put off her gay dress and was now moving about the kitchen with the manner and look of a much provoked person. She felt much inclined to return to the room where she had left her husband and Lizzie, but she thought she would wait and see just how long Bartholomew would talk to the child, and take part against his wife.

When at length Lizzie came into the kitchen, and Mrs. Morrell asked her angrily what she wanted, Lizzie answered so gently, that her companion could not understand it, and she went to her husband to find out what it meant. Not that she intended to ask him ; she was too vexed for that, but she thought he would tell her of his own accord.

Lizzie put on her bonnet and went to give the dollar to the fruit woman. As she approached the stand she saw a gentleman approach and speak to the vender as if he knew her very well. Lizzie thought he was the most elegant looking gentleman she had ever seen, and as she reached the stand she heard him say :

"I told you, Margaret, I thought I should see you again to-day, and buy another of those fine apples," taking an apple and putting down a silver half dollar to pay for it.

"I know you did, sir," said Margaret, "but as you said you hadn't seen any of the folks yet, I thought maybe you'd go to them last night." And she began to look for change for the half dollar. He stopped her saying.

"That price is not too much for *me* to pay."

"Oh, Mr. Nevin, it's too good of you, and you left me a five dollar bill yesterday, for the apple you took ; it makes me ashamed, sir."

"Well, after being away so many months, to come upon you as I did, yesterday, it was not much to give to such an old and tried servant as you were."

At that moment the woman saw Lizzie ; she had been too much taken up with the gentleman to no-

tice the child before, and she gave a start of surprise and pleasure.

The gentleman turned and looked also.

"Who is this little girl, Margaret?" he asked, "you seem to know her."

"I only know her by asking her to have a bit of my breakfast one morning. What's her name, or anything else about her, I can't say, for she wouldn't tell a thing about herself."

And then she said to Lizzie:

"What is it now, dearie?"

But Lizzie was stung by the woman's disclosure of her secret; she had spoken of her as if she had been a mere hungry pauper, and so the little girl stepped up to the stand with a very proud air, and putting down her dollar said, while her eyes flashed and her cheeks burned:

That is to pay you for the bread and coffee you gave me that morning: I wasn't a beggar for I could have had breakfast at home if I had wanted to."

Lizzie turned away leaving the apple woman too much surprised to say a word, while the gentleman looked very much interested.

But she had gone only a step or two when she recollected that she had not told a word of her uncle's message. She went back.

"I forgot to say that my uncle told me to tell you he sent you the money to thank you for your kindness to me."

And again she went, but this time so quickly that she had actually turned a corner before the woman recovered from her astonishment sufficiently to speak; then she said:

"I declare sir, she's taken the breath from me."

Mr. Nevin laughed.

"It seems to be a very unusual case, Margaret, that little black eyed girl coming in such a proud way to pay for a breakfast that she says she could have

had at home. I am very much interested. Tell me all about it."

"I have, sir, told you everything I know myself. I never set eyes on her before that morning that I asked her to have some coffee and bread and butter."

"Ah," said Mr. Nevin, and he looked in the direction Lizzie had taken as if he had some thought of going after her. The apple woman taking up the bill Lizzie had left, went on:

"I feel it to be against my conscience so keep this money, but what am I to do?"

"There is nothing for you to do, but keep it," he replied "and if you should see the little girl again, find out something about her, I am very much interested in her."

Then, with a hasty, but kind adieu, he walked away.

The woman looked after him and shook her head, saying to herself:

"If what they said about you in the house was true, I'm not surprised that you're interested, and under your pleasant, handsome face maybe there's a bit of a heart ache."

If this gentleman had a heart ache he did not show it, but he did show that his mind was not quite made up, for going directly from the apple stand to the Staten Island ferry, he no sooner got there than he turned about, and walked very rapidly away from it. When he reached Broadway he looked in an absent way at the stores till he came to a large handsome one which bore the sign:

"E. BLUN, MERCHANT TAILOR."

Then his face lighted with pleasant recognition, and he went in. Mr. Blun saw him and he hastened to meet him his manner showing surprise and pleasure.

"Mr. Nevin," he exclaimed, reaching out his hand, "when did you get back?"

Mr. Nevin warmly shaking Mr. Blun's hand, answered :

"Yesterday."

"And you have been stopping in town, since? your family of course, are away at this season."

"Yes; my family is at Staten Island. While I have been away they have given up housekeeping and taken to that vagrant way of living, boarding."

"But now that you have come back," said Mr. Blun, "I suppose—"

"Now that I have come back," interrupted Nevin, "I do not know whether I shall go to them, or not. They are living in a hotel, and a hotel is very far from being a home. I thought to join them and I actually went as far as the Staten Island ferry, but I changed my mind when I saw the boat."

"But will they not expect you?" said Mr. Blun.

"No; I have not even hinted that I was coming home."

"Ah, then!" said Mr. Blun, "you are safe."

Then he was silent waiting for Mr. Nevin to take up the conversation.

Mr. Nevin was a wealthy customer of long standing; he was also a most friendly one, putting on no airs because of his riches. He said now:

"You have a family, Blun. I believe; wife and children—how many children?"

"Six," said Mr. Blun surprised: Nevin never had spoken to him like that before, and Nevin seeing his surprise laughed:

"The truth is Blun," he said, "I have been put into strange humor, by something I saw a couple of hours ago," and then he told in a few words about Lizzie Morrell and the apple woman.

Mr. Blun listened, thinking that Lizzie Morrell was a most undisciplined child, but from the way Nevin

spoke of her he felt that Nevin would not agree with him, so he said nothing : he did not think for a moment, even when Nevin described her appearance, that it might be the same little girl who had come to his house with the shaker bonnet ; he only thought of the dreadful want of discipline in her training to take part of the meal of an apple woman when she could have had her breakfast at home ; and what kind of a man could her uncle be to give her so much money to pay for a little bread and coffee—that is, if the child did not tell a lie, which Mr. Blun more than half thought she must have done.

Nevin asked :

“ Have you daughters, Blun ? ”

“ Three,” replied Blun.

“ Three,” said Nevin, “ how old are they ? ”

“ Ten, six, and four years,” replied Blun wondering why his customer should want to know so much about his family.

Nevin went on :

“ Well, Blun, what I saw at the apple stand to-day, has made me feel an interest in—children—” he was going to say little girls, but he checked himself—“ to feel as if they would be a more pleasant and better study than men and women. I do not mean the children of the very rich such as I have been accustomed to see, with their private teachers and all their wishes granted. Your remarks on discipline make me think you are not one of those foolish parents.”

Mr. Blun’s eyes sparkled ; to hear his discipline praised pleased him more than any other praise would have done, and he said with more warmth than he usually spoke :

“ Mr. Nevin, I am a firm believer in discipline Discipline is the producer of manners and morals ; it is the basis of every authority, governmental, or parental, and I make it the rule of my household. The smallest violation of discipline by any one in

my family, or in my employment, is punished immediately and in just proportion to the offence."

"What a well regulated family you must have, Mr. Blun, I think I should like to make its acquaintance."

Mr. Blun was more surprised than he had yet been, and he could hardly believe that the elegant and wealthy Mr. Nevin whom the first circles of society would be glad to welcome had any desire to know the family of a tradesman.

He said in his surprise :

"You, Mr. Nevin, want to get acquainted with my family?"

"Yes ; do I ask too much ? and will you give me an invitation to take effect as soon as possible ? I long to see those disciplined children of yours."

The phrase, "disciplined children," caused Mr. Blun's heart to beat again with pride and pleasure, and he said :

"If you would like to take dinner with us this evening ; Mr. Nevin ; we dine at six, and as it is my custom to have my whole family at table, you will see them all just as they are in the home circle."

"Admirable, Mr. Blun, admirable ; I shall be delighted to take dinner with you, and—" taking out his watch—"in order that I may not disturb the excellent discipline of your household by any unpunctuality, I shall go away immediately."

CHAPTER XIV.

It was part of Mr. Blun's discipline never to tell his wife when he asked anybody to dinner till that person actually presented himself ; that plan, being in his judgment an excellent one to insure care at all times in the household arrangements. Thus, this lady was not surprised when just before going to dinner, her husband looking up from a card which Jane had brought to him, said :

"Mrs. Blun, a gentleman, Mr. Nevin, will dine with us this evening. He is in the parlor now."

But she was very much vexed that she did not have time to put on a more becoming dress ; then she caught sight of the children going down, Helen in her shaker bringing up the rear. • Mrs. Blun turned to her husband in fright and dismay.

"Is Helen to wear that horrid bonnet to dinner?"

"Certainly," he answered, "a visitor is no excuse for violating the discipline of my household. Proceed to the dining room, Mrs. Blun."

Mrs. Blun proceeded but with her cheeks as red as the coral pin at her throat, and her temper roused to an exasperating pitch, and when she saw how handsome and distinguished looking was the guest, and remembered that she had been given no opportunity to change her dress, and that her eldest daughter must appear before him in that horrible bonnet, she was so angry she could hardly speak.

Mr. Blun introduced his wife, and then he introduced Helen, saying :

"The wearing of that bonnet, Mr. Nevin, is an

instance of the justly proportioned punishment which I told you I always inflicted for violation of discipline in my family. It is also an instance in which the punishment is singularly appropriate ; but we shall not keep you waiting to hear its details. Pass to your place, Helen."

One quick mortified look was all that Helen had given to the handsome stranger, and then as she went to her seat, shame and anger made it impossible to keep the tears back ; but nobody saw them for the children had not yet taken their seats, and even if they had, the shaker bonnet would have hidden them.

"My twin boys, Walter and Arden," said Mr. Blun, and there seemed to be a sort of pride in his voice.

Mr. Nevin thought he might well be proud of the handsome, manly looking little fellows, especially Walter. Susie came next, a bright looking little girl, but Lulu who came after, was so pretty and winning that Mr. Nevin wanted to take her in his arms, only he did not know how such an action might be regarded by this master of discipline.

Last of all came the toddling, two year old Harry, held up in Catharine's arms to see the gentleman, and this time regardless of his host's discipline, Nevin stooped forward and kissed him.

All took their seats and the dinner began in the solemn silence that marked every meal of the Blun family ; even the guest feared at first to break it, then he smiled to himself and set out to make everybody talk : Mr. Blun, Mrs. Blun, and even all the little Bluns under his management found themselves saying something a good deal to their own surprise.

The little girl in the queer looking bonnet was often spoken to by the guest, but she always answered without lifting her head so that he could see no more of her face than the one brief look she had given him at first.

Walter sitting next to Helen noticed how her voice trembled when she spoke; he looked mischievously under her bonnet, and saw tears rolling down her cheeks and actually falling into her plate; she was afraid to wipe them away lest her father should see her do so.

The little fellow's heart was touched.

"She's crying because she has to wear that awful hat," he thought, and just at that moment Jane reaching between him and Helen for a tureen of gravy, there came to him all at once the thought that here was an opportunity to do something which might help his sister. So, just as Jane was lifting the tureen carefully over Helen's head, Walter knocked against Jane and gravy and dish fell on Helen's shaker almost covering it with gravy, and the gravy streamed from it in rich brown currents on the table cloth while the dish went to the floor.

The gravy was hot but the closeness of the straw in the shaker kept it from going through to Helen's head or face.

There was immediate and violent consternation, Helen having jumped up with a scream, at the same time taking off the shaker and in so doing covering her hands and part of her dress with gravy. Walter had sprung to his feet looking dreadfully frightened; he hardly thought it would turn out just that way. Jane was angrily protesting that it was not her fault, that Walter had knocked against her arm; Mrs. Blun and Catharine were much distressed, Arden, Susie, Lulu, and even Harry were puzzled to know what had happened. The guest looked amused, and Mr. Blun horrified. His horror would not let him speak till Jane raised her voice, and Helen, not knowing but that her father would put the whole blame on her began to sob. Then Mr. Blun said very sternly:

"Silence!"

And everybody became as still as the grave.

“Are you to blame Walter, for what has happened?” he asked in the same stern voice.

“I guess so, papa ; I knocked against Jane.”

“Why did you knock against Jane?”

Perhaps it was the kind, earnest, encouraging look which Mr. Nevin gave the little fellow that made him feel brave enough to tell the whole truth, for he kept looking at Mr. Nevin while he said :

“I knocked against Jane because I wanted her to spill the gravy on Helen’s hat, so Helen wouldn’t have to wear it any more.”

“Go to your room, sir,” said Mr. Blun, “I shall assign your punishment later, and you, Helen, go also to your room ; your dinner shall be sent to you.”

Then he darted a look at Mrs. Blun to let her know that she was to blame for what had happened ; but Mrs. Blun did not seem to care much. She had made up her mind to show the guest that she had something to do with the management of the children ; so she said to her husband :

“Helen has not done anything to be punished ; why do you send her from the table?”

Mr. Nevin had been thinking the same thing, and he smiled approvingly on Mrs. Blun, but Mr. Blun replied :

“Helen has violated the discipline of the table by jumping up and screaming ; she should have kept her seat and been silent.”

“And let herself be burned?” asked Mrs. Blun. Her husband made no answer, and Mr. Nevin was so engaged in watching the two children as they left the room, that he did not hear her.

Nevin pitied the Blun children, and he pitied Mrs. Blun. He could see how unhappy they all were made by Mr. Blun’s “discipline.” If it were not for the evidences of unhappiness that he saw, he would have thought the “discipline” very amusing, and would have laughed heartily at it, but the thought

of little cowed Helen made him sad. How different from her was the spirited little girl he had met that morning; and she did not seem to be the child of parents in the comfortable circumstances of the Bluns.

When he found at the close of the dinner that it was the rule of the house for the children to go at once to bed, he could not help saying:

“Let them stay up a little while as a favor to me, Mr. Blun; I haven’t really got to know them yet, and might I ask as another favor to have the two brought back who were sent from the table? Put off their punishment till I go away.”

Mr. Blun could not very well refuse, for Mr. Nevin beside being his guest was also an excellent customer.

So the whole family gathered in the parlor to the great astonishment of Helen and Walter at this extraordinary departure from their father’s rules; but they were also very much delighted.

Then, Mr. Nevin, by some wonderful way that he had, gathered all the children about him, and every one of them wanted to talk to him at once.

Mrs. Blun sat watching them as much surprised as were the children themselves at such utter violation of the rules of the household. She had never heard her husband speak of Mr. Nevin, so she did not know who he was, but from the extraordinary privileges granted to him, she knew he must be a person of considerable importance.

Mr. Blun was also watching his guest and his children, hardly knowing whether to be pleased or angry. He ought to have been pleased for it would have been hard to find a brighter, handsomer, happier group of children, and when Mr. Nevin went to the piano and played lively, ringing airs, their delight was unbounded. They broke into song, singing tra la la to the air when they did not know the words and led by Mr. Nevin’s rich voice, the effect was quite inspiring.

The servants hearing it wondered what had happened.

The children quite forgot their father's presence, a good deal to his annoyance, for what would become of his "discipline" if they should lose their fear of him, and at length he could hardly help showing that he was uneasy. But at that moment Mr. Nevin stopped playing and turned to Mrs. Blun."

"Forgive my monopoly of the piano : I did it just to start these little people to singing. But now, Mrs. Blun, give us the pleasure of hearing you."

Mrs. Blun smiled and said :

"Since my marriage I have so rarely touched the piano that I am quite out of practice."

"What a pity," answered Nevin, feeling it hard to keep from showing just what he thought of such neglect.

"But your daughter has begun her lessons," he went on turning to Helen who was standing beside him. Helen looked delighted enough to be taken for one of the very happiest little girls in the world.

Mr. Blun began to speak before his wife could answer.

"No ; I desire my children to be entirely democratic in their tastes. I would have my children so brought up, Mr. Nevin, that they will never forget their father is one of the common people."

Mr. Nevin could not help saying :

"I think, Mr. Blun, you are one of a very uncommon people."

But Mr. Blun without noticing his guest's remark, went on :

"It is for the reason that I desire my children to be democratic in every way that I send Helen to a public school, and next autumn Walter and Arden shall go to a public school."

"But while giving to your children such a democratic education, surely, a knowledge of music would not hurt them ; the refining influence that

comes from music makes up for any little leaning it may chance to give to aristocracy." said Nevin.

Mr. Blun shook his head.

"It is hard for you, Mr. Nevin, who are an aristocrat by birth, breeding and association, to enter into my feelings on this subject. I come from poor parents who could give me nothing but an education, and to build up the business which I now have, required the utmost economy and thrift on my part. At present it gives me enough to keep my family as you see them, and while I deny them nothing that is necessary to their state of life I am careful at the same time to discipline them in habits of economy, regularity and order."

Mrs. Blun had been wondering that he was so long in using his favorite word.

"Then, surely, a knowledge of music is due to their state of life," said Nevin pleasantly, and though he was not looking at Helen, he felt how anxiously she waited for her father's answer; but his answer was:

"When my children finish their common school education, and an education which shall fit them for some useful trade, they may turn their attention to music if they desire; then their characters will be formed and it cannot hurt the family discipline."

Mrs. Blun smiled; she had felt sure her husband would never get through that sentence without bringing in his "discipline."

Mr. Nevin, for the sake of the wistful little creature beside him, made up his mind to try again:

"But think of the happiness music makes in the home circle," he said, "you are keeping that from your family, Mr. Blun."

Mr. Blun looked over at his smiling, delighted wife—she was delighted that her husband's hated discipline was meeting with disapproval, most politely spoken disapproval it is true, but disapproval for all that as anybody could see who looked at and

listened to Mr. Nevin, and it nettled the host. He made up his mind to sting his wife at the same time that he answered his guest, so he said, still looking at Mrs. Blun :

“Mrs. Blun does not think as you do, Mr. Nevin, or she never would have neglected the happiness of *her* home circle by neglecting her music ever since her marriage.”

And Mr. Nevin, seeing the color rise in Mrs. Blun’s face looked at his watch and rose to go.

“I think,” he said, giving one hand to Helen, and letting Walter and Arden take the other, “that I shall go to Staten Island after all, to night. I shall be in time for the last boat. Good bye, little folk.” Kissing them all, and tossing baby Harry whom he took from Catharine’s arms, almost to the ceiling. He caught him so dexterously that Walter and Arden shouted with admiration.

Lulu wanted another “dood bye,” and he lifted her and let her pat his cheek.

“I like ’oo,” she lisped, “’oo don’t let papa be toss ; will ’oo tum aden ?”

“If your papa will invite me,” he said laughing, and then he put her down and took a polite leave of Mrs. Blun.

Mr. Blun went to the door with him and there Nevin said :

“You have done more for me, Blun, than you think. You have given to me an aim in life—at least your children have done it, and there is but one thing to make me still more satisfied ; one wish that you can gratify.”

“What is that ?” asked Mr. Blun, with some uneasiness ; he was afraid it might be to let Helen take music lessons.

But Nevin said :

“To excuse from further punishment the two children you sent from the table.”

Mr. Blun felt better ; certainly, the favor asked

was a hard one to grant, but this was not so bad as to have to go quite against his principles as would have been the case had he let Helen take music lessons.

"I can't refuse you, Mr. Nevin, but it will be a great violation of my discipline."

Nevin laughed.

"Call it an exception, not a violation ;" he said, "don't you know there are exceptions to all rules, and sometimes the exceptions are the better part. Good night."

He was down the steps and some distance up the street softly whistling an air from one of the operas before Mr. Blun seemed to make up his mind to close the door.

CHAPTER XV.

MR. NEVIN reached the ferry in time for the last boat to Staten Island, and when he reached this beautiful spot he was so charmed with the scenery, that he walked very slowly to the hotel. As he drew near, he heard the gay strains of a band, and a moment later he saw that the parlors were brilliantly lighted, and that ladies and gentlemen were dancing. He knew then that a ball, or "hop" was in progress, and it gave him a feeling of disgust.

He walked by the open windows where some of the servants were standing watching the dancers, and as he looked sharply within, an expression of relief came into his face; it was evident that he recognized none of the merry makers.

He turned back to the main entrance where he stood for a moment as if he did not know quite what to do; then, tempted by the beauty of the night, he turned away and strolled down to where he saw the water gleaming in the moonlight. A path bordered by shrubs wound along the water's edge for a half mile or more, and along this path Nevin slowly walked giving himself up to the thoughts caused by the strange incidents of the day. He was so taken up with these reflections he did not notice that he was approaching a lady and gentleman who stood with their backs to him looking out at the water.

The lady was dressed in white; even her head was covered with a sort of loose white hood; it was so loose that every motion she made put it out of place, and at length it fell off showing a mass of flow

hair. Just as the hood dropped from her head, Nevin saw her and her companion, and they hearing his footsteps, turned and saw him. The gentleman exclaimed in surprise, and the lady with a cry of delight sprang forward and threw her arms round Nevin's neck.

"Egbert," she said, while he folded his arms about her and kissed her ; then he held her a little apart from him and looked at her.

"Am I better, or worse looking?" she asked laughing.

"Better," he said, and then he let her go so that he could shake hands with her companion, saying as he did so :

"I have known my own mind so little for the past few months that I was not sure I should come back to New York even after I had secured my passage on the Hamburg steamer. That is the reason I did not write to announce my return."

"Oh, that is no more than we have learned to expect:" laughed Mr. Ingoldsby. "Knowing how eccentric you are, we make all allowances for you."

"It were better that you did not make so many. I should not then so easily leave to others what perhaps I ought to do myself."

Mr. Ingoldsby changed the subject by saying :

"You must have sailed from Hamburg as soon as you received Cornelia's letter saying that we were coming down here. Father prefers this place: its nearness to the city suits him, and it suits me also. But let us go to the hotel and see about rooms for you ; it had better be done at once the guests are so numerous."

"Then, you go Edwin, and attend to it ; I'll remain here and talk to Cornelia," and drawing the young lady's arm through his own, the began to walk along the little path, while Mr. Ingoldsby went back to the hotel.

"I can hardly believe that you are here, Egbert," she said, leaning fondly upon his arm, "from your letters it seemed sometimes as if you would never come back."

"So it often seemed to myself," he answered, "but since I have returned, little incidents have occurred that have made me glad for coming back."

Then he told her what had taken place at Margaret Anthon's fruit stand.

"How strange," said Miss Ingoldsby, "that you should come across Margaret; she left us to take care of her sick sister."

"Yes, I know she did; but she told me that her sister died, and she is quite alone now."

"And the little girl you saw," went on the young lady, "you say she had large black eyes?"

"Yes, positive; but why do you ask? did you think it might be some one you know?"

"Yes—no;" answered Miss Ingoldsby, hardly knowing which to say lest she might break her promise to Edwin; then, so that Egbert would not notice how strangely she answered, she told how the accident caused by their carriage, had brought a little girl having big hazel eyes to her notice; but she did not speak of a previous acquaintance.

When she had finished Egbert told about his visit to the Blun family, pouring out in full his pity for Helen.

"She is a starved child, Cornelia: I mean starved in soul and mind, having such parents. I confess that I felt so much anger and disgust that politeness alone kept me from telling Mr. Blun he was a tyrant with his discipline, and Mrs. Blun that she ought to be ashamed of her neglect to make home happy for her children."

Cornelia was full of sympathy.

"I knew the case would touch your heart," Nevin went on, "and that is why I came over here to-night rather than to wait even till to-morrow."

I want *you* to do something for this poor disciplined little girl."

"Why, what can I do, Egbert?" stopping short in her walk and making him do the same, while she looked up at him wondering:

"When you are in the city you always have one or more little girls whom you help in some way, do you not? In your letters to me you have spoken of some of them."

"Yes; but Egbert, those were the children of poor parents. I used to teach them to sew, and sometimes I read to them. With this Helen Blun that you tell me about, it is very different; she is the child of parents that are somewhat rich."

"All the more need then, for *you* to do something for her. I don't mean teaching her to sew, but, you will know when you see her."

"Why, Egbert, do you mean that I should visit these people:—this family of your tailor?"

Egbert lost his patience.

"Why, Cornelia, is the family of my tailor, because it *is* the family of my tailor, not worthy of a visit from you? Must we go to see only those people who do not have to work for a living, or who chance to have as much money as we have? Am I obliged to remind you that the gentleman who is your father and my stepfather, was a poor man, much poorer than the family of my tailor, when our mother married him. Oh, Cornelia, out upon such foolish pride."

"But, listen a moment, Egbert; you are so admired and courted you can afford not to care what society says about the things you do. I cannot do so. If I go to see Mrs. Blun she will expect to come to see me in return, and when it becomes known that I associate with the wife of a tailor our set will drop me from its social lists; then too, both father and Edwin will be very angry if I do such a thing."

Egbert said something between his teeth which

Cornelia did not catch ; then he began so angrily she could hardly keep from crying :

“ Am I not able to protect you from their anger ? The sham of the thing you call society drove me to Europe a year ago ; my own aimless life has driven me back again. To-day, the children I met seemed to renew my old trust in the good there is in human nature, and to make me eager to do my part in drawing out that good. But it is with children I shall work, not men and women, and the Blun family of little ones, especially that cruelly ‘disciplined’ Helen, seemed to afford me a grand chance. My heart at once turned to you, knowing your kind nature, as the only one of our family who would help me. But how am I met when I tell you my feelings ? by the same talk that makes society the hateful thing it is. Oh, my sister ! I thought better things of you.”

He dropped her arm and turned away. Tears were rolling down her cheeks.

“ Don’t blame me, Egbert,” she said, “ it is the fault of my training ; but I shall do what you wish. I shall go to see Mrs. Blun any day you will take me there.”

“ Very well,” he said in a tone that showed he had forgiven her.

“ But it seems strange,” she went on after a moment’s silence, “ your great interest in these children.”

A vexed look came into his face.

“ Don’t you understand, Cornelia,—have I not explained clearly why I feel this interest ?”

Before she had time to reply Edwin joined them telling he had engaged rooms, and that his father was impatient to see Egbert.

While the three walked back to the hotel, Miss Ingoldsby thought more and more about Nanny Tavish ; how she wished it were Nanny that Egbert had seen at old Margaret’s fruit stand, and how she wished that she herself was not bound by that prom-

ise to Edwin. She felt very much like asking Edwin to release her from it, but she knew him too well to think he would do so.

The meeting between Mr. Ingoldsby and his stepson was, on the part of the old gentleman, gushingly warm, on the part of Egbert, politely kind. Anybody could see that Mr. Ingoldsby was proud that he was the stepfather of the handsome Mr. Nevin, and anyone could see that Mr. Nevin was not at all proud that he was the stepson of Mr. Ingoldsby.

Mr. Ingoldsby was always talking of his "blue blood," and the blue blooded family he had come from; Mr. Nevin took delight in saying there was no blue blood in his veins, and that he did not come from a blue-blooded family.

Edwin Ingoldsby, Egbert's half brother, was twenty-three years old, just twelve years younger than Egbert, and Cornelia was nineteen years old. Edwin, though he was not given to boasting as his father was, showed even when he was a boy, how like he was to his father in tastes and disposition, and for that reason Egbert found it hard to care more for him than he did for old Mr. Ingoldsby. For Cornelia, who had not seen even one summer when her mother died, he had, being so much older, not alone the affection of a brother, but somewhat that of a father. It was due to his training that she wanted to do good even while she enjoyed the pleasures of society more than Egbert cared to have her. But when he was away from home it was hard for her to act as he wished.

"How well you look, Egbert," said Mr. Ingoldsby, "and you have been traveling all the time, at least your letters to Cornelia, the only one you wrote to, were always dated from a different place."

"Yes; I was going about in search of rest."

"And you had to come home to find it, my boy: that's a good sign, a sign that the heart is all right when one turns to home for rest, and such a home

as yours is, my dear fellow, one in which no elements of the common, or vulgar enter, only the pure blue blood."

Egbert could not help saying wickedly :

"Do you mean to say there are no elements of the common or vulgar in this great hotel where you have made your home? that everybody here comes from a blue-blooded stock like your illustrious self?"

The old gentleman answered crossly : "Pshaw ! Egbert : you try not to understand me ; I mean the bosom of your family."

Egbert laughed, and then seeing that his step father was still vexed, he said he was tired, and would retire.

Edwin accompanied him to his rooms, staying with him some time ; then he went to his sister's private parlor where he found her waiting for him.

"What has Egbert been saying to you?" she asked.

"Nothing much ; he is too tired to know, or to show whether he is in his old odd frame of mind, or not. I was not able to get much from him."

"Well ; this is what he said to me," said Cornelia, telling what had passed between her and Egbert, and then she added :

"Since he shows such an interest in children, why may I not tell him about that dear little creature, Nanny Tavish ? I feel as if he ought at least to see her."

"Cornelia, if you break in the least the promise you made me about that Tavish child, that instant I shall cease to have any affection for you, and I shall go away from home."

Cornelia started, and said in dismay :

"Oh, Edwin ! I shall not then ; I shall keep my promise—but, why must not Egbert see her ? if you would only tell me what it all means ?"

"Does not your own sense tell you ? Some accident has made this Tavish child look like Egbert .

Egbert would not be long in seeing that, and with his odd way of thinking and of doing things, he might actually adopt this child, and give to her our portion of his wealth—yours and mine, I mean. Do you understand now?”

She nodded her head but very slowly, for she was not sure that she did understand; what he said in explanation was very strange. How could Egbert give to anybody what belonged to them, but she knew it would be no use to ask anything more. Her brother said all at once:

“When does Mrs. Tavish bring the clothes again?”

“To-morrow afternoon.”

“Will she have the child with her?”

“Yes; don’t you remember to-morrow will be the day I asked her to bring her.”

“Well; you will keep your promise—you will be only civil to this woman and her child when they come?”

“Yes:”

He left her then with an affectionate good night, and as he went down to the grounds to enjoy a stroll and a cigar, he made up his mind that Egbert should accompany him to the city on the next afternoon, and that Cornelia’s visit to the family of the merchant tailor should be put off as long as possible.

CHAPTER XVI.

It seemed to Nanny Tavish on the afternoon of Examination day as if the measure of her joy were full ; her darling mother was so proud and so happy that Nanny had done well, and in addition to that she had the pleasure of the next day's trip to Staten Island to look forward to ; every time she thought of that it seemed to make her glow, and when she found that her mother would be able to go in the morning instead of the afternoon she was still more delighted : it brought the pleasure of seeing that lovely and kind Miss Ingoldsby much nearer.

When the next morning came bright and balmy, and Nanny found herself again in the grounds of the hotel, all the fancies which had grown out of her former visit came back to her. She walked by her mother's side smiling and thoughtful ; she was so quiet that Mrs. Tavish looked at her more than once.

When they reached Miss Ingoldsby's rooms, Miss Ingoldsby's maid opened to Mrs. Tavish's knock, but the young lady was also present. She had not expected Mrs. Tavish till the afternoon, and she intended not to be seen then ; now, however, she was caught, and as she could not bear to be the cause of pain, or disappointment to any one, much less to the smiling, eager child who showed in every feature her delight at the meeting, she could not help feeling very much vexed. She knew the hopes she must have raised in Nanny's heart by the warm way she had asked Nanny's mother to bring her,

and now, to have to keep her promise to Edwin seemed too bad.

She smiled pleasantly, however, and going toward them she bade them a kindly good morning: then, having told her maid to give them chairs, she said to Mrs. Tavish:

“I did not expect you till this afternoon.”

Mrs. Tavish replied:

“I have less work this week; one family I washed for has moved away, so I was able to finish your clothes yesterday.”

Miss Ingoldsby felt as if she could not trust herself longer in sight of Nanny; the child seemed to be looking at her with Egbert's eyes, so she said hurriedly:

“My maid will attend to you, Mrs. Tavish; good morning.”

She passed to an inner room shutting the door tightly behind her.

The maid counted the clothes, and asked Mrs. Tavish how much money was due her; then she went to the inner room, and after a moment came back with the amount and gave it to Mrs. Tavish.

Mrs. Tavish took up her empty basket and turned to go; but Nanny sat as if she were fastened to the chair. Her mother touched her and said:

“Come, Nanny.”

The child stood up but slowly, and with such a changed look, that even the maid wondered what had happened to the little girl to send from her face every trace of the smiling happy look she had when she came in.

She followed her mother out, not saying a word, and with a feeling that the beauty had gone out of everything. She did not even care to look about her; but just as they got to the foot of the broad steps in front of the hotel, the sound of voices behind her caused her to look back.

She saw Mr. Edwin Ingoldsby and another gentle-

man ; they were just coming out of one of the public parlors. At any other time the appearance of the stranger would have startled and delighted Nanny, for it was so like what she had fancied the mysterious Egbert to be ; now, however, her disappointment caused the little romance she had made about him to seem hateful. She was so angry with all the Ingoldsbys that she did not care to know even if the stranger belonged to the family.

Edwin had caught sight of the child's upturned face, and without showing in any way that he knew her, he took his companions arm and drew him back quickly to the parlor.

Mrs. Tavish kept on her way and Edwin thought it was well that the washerwoman and her daughter had not lingered on their way through the hall. Had they done so, all his care to keep Egbert from seeing them would have been useless, and then what he feared, *might* have happened.

How all at once the whole of her little world had changed to Nanny Tavish ; she had expected so much from that second visit to Staten Island, in the way of kindness and interest from Miss Ingoldsby that her disappointment was very bitter. She no longer thought Miss Ingoldsby beautiful ; indeed, she was fast growing to think her very ugly, and she felt as if she should never want to see Staten Island again. Even the beautiful road was now long and tiresome, and she was glad when they arrived at the little house where passengers waited for the boat, so that she could sit down.

All this time her mother had been silent partly because she thought it better to let Nanny follow the bent of her own thoughts awhile, and partly because she herself wanted to think.

For Nanny's sake she also felt keenly the treatment of Miss Ingoldsby, but for her own sake she was glad of it ; it took away from her a great, secret fear, and were it not for Nanny's evident dejection

tion she would have gone on her way rejoicing.

As they went into the little boat house Mrs. Tavish pressed Nanny to her and whispered :

“My darling ; I feel this disappointment for your sake, but you must try and bear it like a brave girl.”

That tenderness went to Nanny's soul ; she pressed her face against her mother's bosom and let her quiet tears flow as much as they would. Then, while she wept, she thought how good it was to have such a kind, fond mother, and to imagine how she should feel if her mother were to die. How little all the kindness and interest of the Ingoldsbys would make up for that loss.

She dried her eyes, looked up at her mother with a smile, and made up her mind not to think of the Ingoldsbys any more. But this was not so easy for the disappointment had taken the relish out of everything, and it gave to her manner an unusual quiet that made Mrs. Tavish anxious.

It was the child's first real experience of the untrustworthiness of human nature. Nanny had thought Miss Ingoldsby almost an angel. It was a great disappointment to have to admit that she did not even mean what she said.

Mrs. Tavish wondered that her little daughter spoke so little ; she had expected to be asked for explanations, and she had been thinking what she should say.

Fondly as Mrs. Tavish loved her child, and well as she understood her, she did not know that in this case the disappointment was too sharp for words ; and not till Monday morning when Nanny was going to school did her mother feel as if the little girl were quite herself.

That day before Nanny returned from school, Mrs. Tavish received a note from Mr. Edwin Ingoldsby saying that he and his father and sister were going to Newport to stay till the autumn, after which they

would resume house-keeping ; that plan made Mrs. Tavish's services no longer necessary, but the note contained a bill equal in amount to the sum she would have earned by working for them a full month longer.

She felt at once relieved and dismayed ; relieved that this note removed her secret fear, but dismayed because of the loss of the work she needed so sorely.

CHAPTER XVII.

AN hour after Edwin Ingoldsby had caught that unexpected sight of Mrs. Tavish and her little daughter, he made up his mind to take his family without delay to Newport.

Cornelia was too amiable not to be satisfied with the arrangement ; his father also was satisfied, but then he had been told privately why Edwin desired the change.

Egbert looked cross.

"Is there not enough of gay life here?" he asked.

"Too much," Edwin replied, "it is to have a more quiet life that I want you all to go to Newport. I shall secure a cottage where we shall have home life, not hotel life."

Egbert shrugged his shoulders.

"If you are going to ask society people to your cottage, I see little prospect of quiet, or of home life."

"We shall not ask anybody, you odd fellow ; you shall have everything your own way. On Monday I shall secure the cottage, and we can go to Newport on Tuesday."

Edwin was successful in securing a cottage, and when he informed Cornelia they could leave immediately, she shook her head.

"I have promised Egbert to go with him on Monday to see that Blun family I told you about," she said. "He is quite anxious to have me call."

Edwin looked vexed, and his sister resumed :

"Egbert and I can go in the morning to see these

Bluns, and return in time to go in the evening."

"Nonsense," said Edwin, "it was to get you away so that you could not see these Bluns at all, that I secured the cottage so quickly; now, however, all my haste is in vain."

"It would be of no avail anyway except to postpone my seeing the Bluns," said Cornelia, "for when Egbert puts his mind to a thing, he is bound to accomplish it."

"That may be, but at least your immediate visit to them would be avoided, and something might happen to prevent it altogether. My motto is, 'keep away the evils that are near; distant ones often take care of themselves.'"

"And will my going to see the Bluns, be an evil?" she asked with dismay.

Her brother was angry with himself for having said so much and he answered quickly:

"I did not mean exactly evil, but I do not see why Egbert should force you to become acquainted with these low persons. I certainly cannot understand the good of such proceedings."

"I tried to tell him all that," said Cornelia, anxious to show Edwin how she had endeavored to please him, "but, as I have told you already, it only made Egbert angry to think that I cared so much for what society would say."

"We shall have to give Egbert his way, I suppose; but when you go to see these people, Cornelia, be careful to talk as little as possible," her brother replied.

On Monday when Edwin saw his sister and Egbert leave for the city, he gave her a secret look of warning, and she, understanding it, smiled. But when she was alone with Egbert, she forgot everything save Egbert himself, and by the time they arrived in New York, Miss Ingoldsby was in a frame of mind that would have startled her blue-blooded father and brother.

They had been annoyed by Egbert's refusal to take the carriage, saying with mock gravity when he was told of the fatigue the journey would cause Cornelia, that, that young lady must be alarmingly delicate if she could not sometimes ride in an omnibus.

So an omnibus they took at the corner of one of the streets that run into lower Broadway, and rode to Mr. Blun's store.

Mr. Blun felt complimented by the visit, and he so expressed himself, adding that he would accompany them to his house; he did not tell them his chief reason for doing so was that he would not trust Mrs. Blun to receive such visitors alone; he did not know how she would violate his discipline if he were not present.

Mrs. Blun, never dreaming that anything would happen to bring her husband home at the extraordinary hour of two o'clock in the afternoon, was deep in the delights of a new novel. She had begun it just after breakfast intending to read only an hour or so, but luncheon time came and she was so interested, she could hardly leave it to go to the table; consequently, her morning gown had not been changed and her hair was very untidy; in fact she looked very unlike what her husband's "discipline" demanded, when he went up to her room to tell her that Mr. Nevin and his sister were in the parlor.

Astonishment kept her from even closing the book for a moment after his entrance, and the way he pronounced her name sent the blood into her face.

"What have you been doing, Mrs. Blun, that I find you still in your breakfast attire, and where are the children?"

"What have I been doing? I have been reading," tossing the book behind her, and standing up, "and the children are with Catharine, of course. Isn't that according to your discipline, Mr. Blun?"

"It is not according to my discipline to find you in such a dress, and Mr. Nevin and his sister are in the parlor."

"What? that elegant Mr. Nevin and his sister," repeated Mrs. Blun, surprised by the information into brief forgetfulness of her mortification and surprise, "and so soon after his first visit—really, he must think we are very stylish people since he brings his sister to visit us."

"You are mistaken, Mrs. Blun; it is precisely because we are *not* stylish people that he brings his sister to visit us."

"Don't think for a moment that I meant he thought *you* were stylish, Mr. Blun;" his wife retorted, "no one who ever saw you could make such a mistake. But he was impressed by your wife, and his present visit is due to that. I shall see them as soon as I change my dress."

She tossed her head, and was passing on to a wardrobe, but her husband placed himself before her.

"You shall see them now, Mrs. Blun, just as you are."

"What! in my morning dress? Have you no regard for the appearance of your wife before these strangers?"

"I have the regard which my wife herself has for her appearance, when she is too lazy to change her morning dress though the morning has passed, till visitors come. I hide nothing, Mrs. Blun, from the eyes of visitors to this house; and as you know that it is part of my discipline to have you at all times set an example of neatness and regularity to your children, it is my desire now to show how you have thwarted my discipline in this respect."

Mrs. Blun tossed her head again, and laughed.

"I think, Elliott, you must have lost your mind."

"No, Madame; I am in perfect possession of my senses, and I insist that you shall come to the parlor with me, at once, or I shall tell these people that

you were prevented from coming by that disgraceful negligence of your dress. And I shall describe to them your appearance."

Mrs. Blun knew that her husband would do exactly what he said, and thinking that his description of her appearance would be worse than it really was, she gave one hasty, despairing glance at herself in the glass, brushed her hair with her hands, smoothed the rumpled folds of her dress, put her collar straight, and with a scowl swept down the stairs.

As they reached the parlor door she became painfully aware of another defect in her toilet. Owing to having worn in her youth shoes too small for her feet, she had to wear now, in the house for the sake of comfort, slippers too large for her, and that were only kept in place by strings: the strings being any color, or material most convenient to Mrs. Blun's hand.

This time the strings happened to be somewhat soiled yellow ribbon, and their raveled edges could be seen every time Mrs. Blun took a step forward.

She felt with a sort of chill that one of those yellow strings had become untied, and probably would be dangling somewhere in full view, while she would have the additional trial of endeavoring to keep the slippers on. But there was no opportunity for even a hasty adjusting of the loosened string, for Mr. Blun had flung the parlor door wide open, and there sat the visitors.

By walking slowly and causing her foot to perform a sort of gymnastic feat, backward, Mrs. Blun managed not to part with the shoe, but knowing the contrast her dress must present to the neat, quiet, tasteful attire of the young lady who rose as she came in, she felt ashamed and awkward.

She hardly knew what she answered to the kindly greeting of Mr. Nevin, or to his introduction of his sister, and she did not dare to look at her husband lest that might provoke from him some remark which would make her feel worse.

Mr. Nevin, however, came to her rescue, for while he was surprised at, and repelled by her appearance, he pitied her embarrassment, and he made haste to ask for the children, particularly Helen.

Being told that she was expected from school in a little while he said that he and his sister would wait to see her, and then to give the ladies an opportunity to become acquainted, he began to talk to Mr. Blun.

Miss Ingoldsby put away from her the unpleasant impression made by Mrs. Blun, and she was so simple and agreeable, that the hostess began to feel quite at ease, and in a short time she was telling very frankly, how little society she had and how her husband would never let her go to any of the parties given by the neighbors, but she felt sure he would let her go to one given by Mr. Nevin.

Miss Ingoldsby could hardly refrain from laughing both at the idea of her step-brother who hated all such frivolities, giving a party, and Mrs. Blun, the mother of six children showing all the eagerness of a school girl to go to a party. But she also pitied this mother of six children, recollecting what Egbert had told her of Mr. Blun's discipline, and instead of laughing, she had such a sympathetic, kindly look, that Mrs. Blun forgot everything about herself except that she might be invited to one of Mr. Nevin's parties.

She even forgot her untied slipper, and making a sudden movement with her foot, the slipper bounded off, never stopping till it reached a spot three feet distant—and making a noise that caused everybody to look—where it lay in all the faded splendor of its yellow ravelled ribbons, worn, crooked heel, and discolored leather. Perhaps that which made its owner feel more ashamed than anything else, was its size ; it seemed large enough to have held both of Miss Ingoldsby's feet.

Mrs. Blun wished that the parlor floor might open and swallow her, but Mr. Blun after the first in-

stant of dumb surprise, rose, picked up the slipper, and brought it to his wife.

“Mrs. Blun, your slipper has rebelled at being fastened in such an untidy manner.”

If a look could have crushed him, his wife’s look certainly would have done so, as she almost snatched the slipper from him, but what reply she would have made was stopped by an uproar made up of shrieks, the loud and violent mews of a cat, the scuffling of feet, and children’s voices and the uproar seemed to come from the basement hall.

Mr. Blun straightened himself in order to meet this dreadful violation of discipline, and at that moment there burst into the parlor a stout, middle aged woman who was trying to shake from her ankle a large cat; the cat was dripping from some sticky moisture, and each time the woman shook her foot the cat’s nails went deeper causing the screams that made the chief part of the noise.

Walter and Arden were following her, both panting and shouting:

“Stand still and we’ll take her off.”

But the woman seemed to be as frightened as was the poor animal that clung to her, and not thinking who was looking at her she fairly danced in her efforts to get rid of the cat.

“She’ll kill me;” she said, “and I’ll not stay in this house another minute. Oh, those vagabonds of boys.”

Mr. Nevin seemed to be the first to think what to do. He took his cane and with it drove off the desperate animal; it dashed out into the hall.

The woman was nearly frantic.

“I’ll leave this very day, Mr. Blun,” she said, “it’s what I ought to have done when one of your children put the hair in the puddding, and not to wait till your boys set the cat on me.”

“We didn’t papa; we didn’t set the cat on her,” said both little fellows together, and Walter went on:

“We only wanted to give the cat a bath.”

“Yes ; and they gave the cat a bath in my pan of warm starch that I had ready for some clothes left over from last week ; and if the starch was boiling hot as it might have been it would have been all the same ; they’d have scalded the poor animal. But I’ve had enough of your family, Mr. Blun. I’m sorry to intrude on you this way when you have company, but I was just beside myself when that mad creature sprang upon me, and I couldn’t get her off, and knowing you were up here, sir, I came up to let you see the whole thing for yourself.”

Mr. Blun had let her go on talking because he was so mortified and angry at having such a scene before his visitors after all he had said about his discipline, that he did not know what to say, nor could he command his voice to say anything.

When the cook had left the room Mr. Nevin drew the two little glowing excited boys to him, and won from them a frank account of their mischief. Mr. Blun out of respect for his guests was obliged to listen.

Walter spoke first :

“Arden and me was in the yard, Mr. Nevin,” fixing his eyes on Nevin’s face, “and the cat was on the winder sill of the laundry room—”

“She was stretched on the winder sill,” said Arden.

“And she was awful dirty,” went on Walter.

“Dirty as mud,” added Arden.

“And there was a big pan of white stuff on the table right near her, and we just thought it would be jolly nice to give her a bath in it.”

“Awful jolly nice,” repeated Arden.

“You see, Mr. Nevin, the stuff looked so white, and the cat was so black dirty, and we didn’t think it would be any harm because it wasn’t in the kitchen, it was in the laundry, so it wasn’t anything cook was making, and there wasn’t nobody in the laundry——”

“There wasn’t nobody in the laundry,” repeated Arden.

“And the winder was open, and I jumped in and took hold of the cat’s tail——”

“No ; you took hold of the cat’s head,” corrected Arden.

“Oh, yes ; I took hold of the cat’s head, and Arden, he took hold of the cat’s tail, and we soused her in the pan jolly nice.”

“Awful jolly nice,” said Arden as if he were enjoying it all over again.

“And then cook, she came in, and she screamed at us, and we let the cat go, and the cat was so frightened that she just jumped at cook and got on her foot ; and cook was so mad she wouldn’t wait to let us get the cat off ; she just come up here, and we come too. That’s it, Mr. Nevin.”

“Yes, Mr. Nevin ; that’s it ;” said Arden.

“And we didn’t mean for to do any harm, Mr. Nevin,” said Walter, speaking as if he were very sorry

“No ; Mr. Nevin, we didn’t mean for to do any harm,” said Arden.

“And we’s sorry now, papa” said Walter turning to his stern looking father.

“Yes ; we’s both sorry now, papa,” repeated Arden, also turning to his father.

“And your father forgives you,” said Mr. Nevin taking a hand of each of the little fellows and bringing them to Mr. Blun.

“Such an honest confession must win forgiveness. I congratulate you, Mr. Blun, on having such manly sons, and if it be your discipline that has made them so truthful, your discipline cannot be too much praised. If you have not already pardoned them let me beg you to do so,” holding out a hand of each little boy to Mr. Blun.

That compliment to his discipline caused Mr. Blun to feel a throb of very secret pride, and he was soft-

ened by it. He took the little outstretched hands in his own, and said :

“I forgive you this time my boys.”

How thankful they both felt to Mr. Nevin, and the moment their father let go their hands, they turned to him, Walter saying :

“We wouldn’t never be naughty, Mr. Nevin, if you lived with us.”

Nevin laughing heartily led them both to Cornelia.

All this time Mrs. Blun had neither spoken, nor moved. She was standing just where she stood when the cook came in, and she looked as if she were in a dream.

The way that her husband did everything Mr. Nevin asked him to do made her feel as if she could not be quite awake. She never had known him to let a fault go without punishment before.

Just then she heard Helen’s voice in the basement hall calling Jane. Helen had just come home from school, and as usual she was seeking Jane to coax her for some cake, or preserves to eat with the bread and milk.

Jane was in the kitchen listening to the indignant cook’s account of what had taken place up stairs, and before she could answer Helen, Mr. Blun stepped to the open parlor door and called his daughter.

Helen was frightened at the sound of his voice ; she had not dreamed that he could be in the house and as she went up to him she felt thankful that she did not have time to coax Jane for something forbidden ; of course her father would have heard that also.

She had not yet taken off her bonnet—the same somewhat shabby one that Lizzie Morrell had taunted her about—and as she came timidly into the room her cheeks flushed, and for the moment not seeing any one but her father, she was a touching picture of childish shyness and beauty.

Miss Ingoldsby was won at once ; and when she

was introduced to Helen she threw her arms around her and kissed her warmly.

Then Mr. Nevin began to tell some of his amusing stories, and everybody seemed to forget the slipper, and the cook and the cat.

After a little he contrived to make an opportunity for Cornelia and Helen to talk apart, and Cornelia easily won the little girl to speak of her school, her lessons, and her teacher ; of her class mates she said little though the young lady even asked Helen the names of some of them.

Miss Ingoldsby wanted to find out from the names whether the children were of American, or foreign born parents, and Helen told the name of nearly every girl in the class except Nanny Tavish and Lizzie Morrell. She disliked both Lizzie and Nanny so much she would not even mention them.

Miss Ingoldsby conceived a warm interest in Helen, but it was a different kind of interest from that she felt in Nanny Tavish—Nanny bearing such a strong resemblance to Egbert, seemed nearer to Miss Ingoldsby than any other strange little girl could ever be.

Helen was delighted with her new acquaintance because of her rich dress and elegant manners, and the notice of such a fine lady greatly flattered Helen's vanity.

Mr. Nevin said at the close of the visit :

“ When we come back from Newport, my sister and I shall give ourselves the pleasure of seeing your family often, Mr. Blun. We mean to take a house somewhere up town here, and then all of you must come and see us.”

Mrs. Blun's heart gave a bound of delight. Here was a prospect of an invitation to one of Mr. Nevin's parties. Her delight made her bold enough to say :

“ Oh, how nice that will be, and I shall be impatient for you to return. I suppose you will give a party early in the season, Mr. Nevin : I hope you

will, for I do so want to get into society. My husband never lets me go to any parties, but he thinks so much of you, that if you give one I'm sure he'll let me go to that."

A peculiar look that Cornelia thought she understood, came into Nevin's face, but it vanished in an instant and he said with a laugh, and a bow:

"You honor me, my dear lady, by thinking I have so much influence with your husband."

Mr. Blun had darted a frowning look at his wife, but he had to clear his forehead, and even to force a somewhat pleasant expression to his face, for the guests were leaving, and as Mrs. Blun with a pang thought afterward, without saying yes, or no, about the party.

"Poor Mrs. Blun!" said Nevin as they reached the street, "she little knows what society is."

"She expects you to give a party," said Cornelia wickedly.

"Perhaps I shall," he replied.

Cornelia stood still on the sidewalk, bringing him to a stand also.

"Do you mean, Egbert, to give a party at which our friends, father and Edwin, would have to meet the Bluns?"

"Why not?"

"I thought you hated society customs," the lady remarked.

"It is well sometimes, to do things we hate when others will be helped by them; but don't distress yourself, Cornelia; there will be plenty of time to think about it; and now to come back to our call of this morning," drawing her arm more firmly through his own, and walking on again, "I think you may be able after a little to do that poor Mrs. Blun some good; I shall try to induce her husband to abate a little of his dreadful discipline. You will try, Cornelia, will you not?"

"Oh, yes," she said, keeping down a sigh, and wishing it were not so hard to please both him and Edwin.

CHAPTER XVIII.

IN spite of the fact that Mr. Nevin had not given an answer to Mrs. Blun's question of the party, Mrs. Blun felt very hopeful about it, and it put her into such good spirits she did not mind much what her husband said to her. He looked very black when he turned from the door after parting with his visitors, but before he could utter a word, the cook with her bonnet and shawl on, and a bundle in her hand, thrust herself into the parlor.

"I'm going now, Mr. Blun ;" she said, "and so that I'll be mannerly, I'll call at your store for my wages. I'm not in any hurry sir, for I don't forget you were always a good payer. The dinner's pretty well under way, so that Jane can manage it for this evening, and if you're agreeable to the idea, sir, she knows a good cook as can take my place ; but she won't do the washing as I did ; maybe, however, you'd like to give the washing out ; there's plenty of women 'd be glad to get it. Good bye, sir."

She made a deep courtesy to him, and was turning to do the same to Mrs. Blun, when Mr. Blun said quickly, taking out his pocket-book.

"I'll pay you now ; that will cover what is due to you."

He put into her hand a bill ; it was a little over her month's wages, at which she courtesied again to him, then she courtesied to Mrs. Blun and the children and went out.

Mr. Blun turned to his wife.

“You will see that dinner is on the table at the usual hour. I am going to the store.”

He went away, leaving his wife not knowing whether to be glad that he had not given his customary lecture on discipline, or to be angry at the order he had given her about dinner. She said aloud regardless of the presence of the children.

“I wonder if he expects me to go into the kitchen and get the dinner.”

Mrs. Blun did not like to remember that before her marriage she had been obliged to cook a good many dinners.

“That dreadful cook,” she went on, “to leave like that; but it’s all your fault, you horrid children,” turning her anger on her little sons. The children however, did not care much for their mother’s anger; they knew she spoke just from the feeling of the moment, and that she generally forgot to keep either her promises or her threats.

“If Mr. Blun should take it into his head to give out the laundry work,” she went on, “I suppose he will make me go roaming over the country to find a washerwoman.”

Helen started.

“A washerwoman, mamma; there’s a girl in our class, and her mother does washing. Shall I tell her you want her to do ours?”

“Oh, is there?” said Mrs. Blun with a sigh of relief, “well, tell your father about it when he comes home.”

Helen hoped with all her heart her father would tell her to speak to Nanny the very next day. That would be sweet revenge for the airs Nanny had put on about the shaker bonnet, for she meant to ask Nanny if her mother would do the washing, loud enough for many of the girls to hear, and that would make Nanny feel ashamed; it would also take her pride down for having done better in the examination than anybody else. So busy was Helen with all

these thoughts she did not hear her mother tell her to call Catharine. Mrs. Blun was going to scold Catharine for having let Walter and Arden out of her sight.

"Helen!" called Mrs. Blun a second time, "What a provoking child you are. Didn't you hear me tell you to call Catharine down?"

"No ma'am," said Helen carelessly.

Catharine had been very much tried that morning by the pranks of the twins, and when she came down stairs and found what she was wanted for, she said sharply:

"Why did I let them out of my sight? because it would take forty-four pair of eyes to watch them, and after they had plastered Lulu's hair with molasses, and put a live mouse in my work basket so that it jumped in my face when I opened the lid, and put the mustard that was in the cruet on Harry's shoes, I was glad enough to let them out of my sight; and I'll say the same thing to Mr. Blun if he brings me to account."

The twins felt it was their turn to get angry, and Walter said before his brother could speak:

"That's because you're so sassy, Catharine; you're always scolding and you won't let us do a thing."

"You won't let us do a thing," repeated Arden, "just as if we was babies like Lulu and Harry."

"Me aint no baby," said Lulu who with Susie had followed Catharine down from the nursery, where they left Harry taking his afternoon nap.

Lulu went on boastfully:

"Me is a big dirl," and she drew up her little figure till Helen and the boys laughed; that made Lulu angry. She knit her brows, shut her chubby fists tight, and going up to Arden said:

"Don't 'oo laugh at me; if 'oo do, I pummy 'oo."

"Pummy" meant pommel; she had heard the cook use it frequently when that person wanted to speak

of the whipping she thought the Blun boys so often and so richly deserved. Helen and her brother laughed again, louder than before ; then Lulu struck Arden with her fat fists.

“Take them away, Catharine,” said Mrs. Blun, too lazy to trouble herself to quiet the uproar.

Catharine began to drive the children before her ; then Arden gave Lulu a pinch that made her howl ; Walter with his foot tripped Helen up, making her fall against the ornamental fire irons that stood beside the polished mantelpiece. They fell with a loud clatter, and Mrs. Blun got up from her seat, desperate.

“Catharine, will you take those children away ? I declare, between Mr. Blun, and you servants, and those dreadful children, I shall be on a sick bed.”

CHAPTER XVIII.

WHEN Mr. Blun came back to dinner he looked so stern Helen did not dare to speak to him ; she hoped her mother would broach the subject of the laundress but Mrs. Blun said nothing.

Catharine waited on the table so as to let Jane finish the work in the kitchen, and the meal went on in the usual solemn silence.

Mrs. Blun felt certain that after dinner her husband would speak to Catharine for Catharine's own neglect of discipline in letting Walter and Arden out of her sight, and recollecting the girl's impertinent answer to herself that afternoon, Mrs. Blun sincerely hoped he would. But, after dinner, instead of saying a word to Catharine, or even showing that he meant to speak to her later, he went into the parlor without opening his lips to any one. Mrs. Blun followed him, and when she found he did not notice her presence, she began to feel uneasy. She did not know what new rules of "discipline," he might be planning.

He was thinking whether he ought not to get an entire new set of servants, and while laying down his rules to them, lay them down anew to his wife, threatening at the same time if she did not see them kept, to bring an old maiden aunt to enforce them.

But, to change all the help would take more time from his business than he could spare ; he never trusted his wife to engage a servant,—and at length, he made up his mind to keep the two he had, but he

would have a plain, stern talk with Catharine, and he would go to the nursery so as to have it at once, and also to see what kind of discipline she had there. He said to his wife :

“ I am going to the nursery to see for myself what Catharine’s discipline is there in the evenings.”

“ What discipline would you have there at this hour ?” said his wife sharply, “ the children are asleep, I suppose.”

“ You suppose, Mrs. Blun ; it is your duty to know when they go to sleep, and to know whether Catharine regulates their lying down properly ; they should be placed on the side opposite the heart with their heads not too much raised, and their hands at a gentle inclination to their breasts.”

“ Yes ; and they’ll stay with their hands at a gentle inclination to their breasts,” mocked Mrs. Blun, “ they never roll in their beds, of course not, nor kick, nor get their heads off the pillows, nor fall out of bed ; oh, no ! the dear, quiet, little things ; they just stay like little wooden statues wherever you put them, Mr. Blun,”—and Mrs. Blun laughed.

Her husband without answering her went up to the nursery. His wife followed him.

The nursery was hardly prepared for Mr. Blun’s coming. It is true, Harry was asleep in his crib, and Lulu and Susie had been put into their little beds in the next room where Catharine also slept, and which opened into the nursery.

The nursery was large enough, not only for Harry’s crib, and separate little beds for the twins, but also for a play room.

Walter and Arden were not yet in bed, nor were they even getting ready to go to bed. Both were on their knees pretending to look for the contents of Catharine’s work basket. Arden had slyly upset it, and he and Walter had asked Catharine to let them stay up long enough to put all the things back, promising to do so with great care.

Catharine had a novel in her pocket that Jane had lent her ; she had read some of it and she was very anxious to read more, so she said :

“ I’ll let you have ten minutes,” and sitting down by a little table under the gas jet, she began to read.

“ All right,” said Walter and Arden together, looking at each other and “ smiling jolly,” as Arden would have said.

Then they pretended to look about the floor very carefully, Arden saying after a little :

“ I’m gettin’ your needles fast, Catharine, an’ I’m stickin’ ’em in your cushion. Gettin’ a good many pins, too. Shall I stick ’em in with the needles ?”

“ Yes, yes ; put them all in the cushion, and don’t speak any more, but hurry up,” said Catharine, so interested in her book that she was impatient at being interrupted.

“ We’re hurryin’ all we can,” said Arden, “ but there aint much light down here on the floor, so we has to feel with our fingers.”

“ While Arden was speaking Walter had crept to the open door ; after a little he looked back at Arden and nodded. All at once they stopped and jumped up, and in a tone of affright Arden cried :

“ Papa is coming up here.”

Catharine sprang to her feet shoving the book into her pocket and reached out her hand to draw one of the boys to her, and just then the master of the house stood in the doorway.

The light was not near enough to show his face plainly, but everybody felt from the motionless way he stood and looked about the room that he was in a rage. Walter and Arden trembled as they thought of his next step forward.

Should they tell him, could they tell him ? but before either of them could get courage to do so, Mr. Blun lay prostrate on the floor of the nursery.

His feet had caught in the twine which Walter had fastened across the lower part of the doorway

in order to trip up Catharine when she should go out of the room : they knew she went down stairs for some purpose every night as soon as all the children were in bed.

And Mr. Blun could not get up because one of his feet had become entangled in the twine.

The comical sight was too much for the nurse ; she laughed aloud, and Mrs. Blun who had been just behind her husband laughed aloud also.

The boys were scared, and Walter ran to help his father, while Lulu awakened by the noise toddled out in her night gown, saying as she saw her father trying to get up :

“Poor papa ! did ’oo fall ?”

During the twelve years of their married life Mrs. Blun had never heard her husband use a profane word, but now, when at length he had released his foot, and stood up, she heard him say something between his teeth that sounded very much like swearing.

He caught Walter and Arden each by an ear, but he said to Catharine :

“Do you know anything about this ?” indicating the broken twine at his feet.

“*Me* know anything about that ?” said Catharine, not afraid to speak boldly, for she felt that she would be blamed in any case.

“You had better ask your sons about it, and ask them about all the mischief they’ve done to-day—giving the cat a bath isn’t all.”

“Is this your doing ?” asked Mr. Blun, giving a tweak to the ear of each ; the tweak brought a scream of pain from Arden, but only a flush and a wince from Walter ; he was not going to let Catharine know it hurt him, and he said boldly, looking at her while he spoke :

“I did it, papa. I went down into the kitchen after Cook went away, and I hunted till I found some nails ; then I got one of the smoothing irons and I

came up here, and I hammered the nails in where you see 'em, and then Arden and me we took that cord from our kites, and we made it up to upset Catharine's work basket to-night, so while Arden'd be picking up the things I'd be tying the cord round the nails. We wanted to make Catharine fall when she'd go out of the room, because she told on us to-day, and she acts sassy to us all the time."

Mr. Blun did not forget that Catharine had laughed at him.

"It is plainly to be seen, Catharine," he said, looking at her again, and not holding the little fellows' ears quite so tightly, "that your discipline of these children is not what it should be. At the end of the month you will find another place."

"Yes sir; I'll be glad to take another place."

Harry just then awoke, and began to cry, and Catharine was glad of the excuse to turn away from Mr. Blun to the child's crib.

Mr. Blun said, letting go of the little boy's ears:

"What else did you do to-day, beside giving the cat a bath, and tying the cord to the door?"

Walter, as usual was the spokesman.

"There was some molasses in a jug on the dresser in the kitchen, and I thought it would be nice to put a little on Lulu's hair to make it stay down slick like the stuff mamma puts on hers, so I took it when nobody wasn't looking, and Lulu said she liked it."

"Es," interposed Lulu, "me tould ub my hand on my hair, and then lick it; it wos nice," and she smacked her lips as if still tasting its sweetness.

Walter went on.

"Catharine was awful mad and she soused Lulu's head in the basin, and my head too, for punishment she said, and I just fought her then, papa, but it wasn't no use, cause she was so strong; and then I went down to the yard, and Willie Pop next door was in his yard; and he asked me if I wanted a live mouse, and I said yes; and he had one tied to a long

string and he throwed it over the fence, and I ketched the string and me and Arden put it in Catharine's work basket, and that made her madder'n ever ; and she took our bow arrows and hided them, and would n't give 'em to us.

"Then Arden and me was tired, and we didn't have nothing to play with, and Catharine, she was readin', and she didn't pay no 'tention to us, and we went down stairs to the dining room, and the castor was on the table, and Arden, he said the mustard would do for yellow paint ; but we was afraid to paint anything in the dining room, so we took it up stairs, and Harry was asleep, and Catharine she was readin' and Harry's shoes was on the floor, and we just got 'em painted with the mustard when she seen us. Then, she was madder'n than fire, and she shaken us awful, and she called us monkeys. Now, papa, that's all we did to-day."

The manner in which it was told sounded so amusing that Mrs. Blun could not help laughing to herself, and with something of a mother's feelings, she hoped her husband would not punish the little fellows ; she knew it would be useless for her to intercede for them.

But, proud as Mr. Blun felt of the manly way in which his son had acknowledged his faults, and half disposed as he was to forgive them because of that manliness, he felt that he could not forego his wonted discipline. But it puzzled him to know what punishment to inflict, and after five minutes deep thought he said that the little boys should have no dessert for a month, and should be confined to the nursery for a whole day. Then he went down stairs, his wife following him. When they reached her dressing room he paused, saying :

"I want to speak to you, Mrs. Blun."

Then he opened the door and stepped aside to let her precede him into the room. He closed the door carefully after him and went on with his slow, pre-

cise step to the middle of the floor. His wife seated herself in the most comfortable chair, thinking :

“ I may as well make myself as easy as I can under these trying circumstances.”

“ Mrs. Blun ?” said her husband, keeping his voice up as if he intended to say more, but first wanted to be sure that she was paying proper attention.

“ Mr. Blun ?” she said, mocking him.

He went on :

“ I wish, Mrs. Blun, to lay before you again the rules necessary to keep up my discipline. I am going to engage new domestics, and it behooves me, Mrs. Blun to see that they are instructed in their new duties without fear of misunderstanding, or laxity on their part ; and it behooves you, Mrs. Blun to so understand my rules, and to so follow out the requirements of my discipline, that these new domestics shall not be able to transgress, or violate, or neglect, any part of their duty.”

Mrs. Blun arranged herself still more comfortably in her chair.

“ Are you going to send Jane away also ?” she inquired.

“ Yes ; I shall make an entirely clean sweep. I shall not permit to remain in my house any servant who has witnessed the violations of discipline that have taken place, and who probably would report them to the newly engaged help.”

Mrs. Blun thought it a good opportunity to find out what he meant to do about the family washing, and she asked :

“ Do you want the washing done out of the house ? Helen says there’s a girl in her class whose mother is a fine laundress, and I know it will be easier to get a good cook when she is hired to do nothing but the cooking.”

“ Mrs. Blun, I desire that you turn your mind away from the family washing just now. My object in speaking to you at this time is to impress upon

you a proper sense of your duties and your responsibilities ; in a word, Mrs. Blun, to make sure that you understand what I wish, Mrs. Blun, and that you will do it ; *do it*, Mrs. Blun, *do it*."

Mrs. Blun sat up very straight in her chair and asked sharply :

"Mr. Blun, am I your wife, or am I your servant?"

"You have the honor, Mrs. Blun, to be my wife, and the female head of my house, but as such I expect you to do *your* duty in carrying out my discipline ; in teaching my children perfect propriety of conduct, and my servants a perfect knowledge of their duties ; otherwise, Mrs. Blun, painful as the duty will be I shall be obliged to bring my maiden aunt, the worthy Miss Rebecca Luxor, to take charge of my household, and to teach *you*, Mrs. Blun, how to keep the discipline I demand in my family."

Mrs. Blun was out of her chair in an instant.

"Bring your aunt here to teach *me*? to be over *my* family? try it, Mr. Blun—let that woman, or any other woman, coming in such a capacity, cross the threshold of this house, if you dare."

Mrs. Blun's temper surprised her husband ; she had generally seemed too lazy to take the trouble to show so much spirit, and not knowing quite what to say to her he retreated to the door.

"Mrs. Blun," he said, "having lost all control of yourself, you are not in a condition to be spoken to."

Then before she could reply, he left the room.

Just because Mrs. Blun seemed to think well of giving out the family washing, Mr. Blun thought it would not be well at all, and the next morning he left his business to go to an intelligence office for a cook.

Hitherto Mr. Blun had been rather fortunate in obtaining servants through the recommendation of customers, and in not having to change his help of-

ten. Now, however, the customers who might have helped him were out of town, and when he went to the intelligence office he was told by the proprietor it was not a good time to get competent servants, most servants preferring to make no change till the autumn, but the gentleman could see those who were waiting for places.

A very large woman came forward ; Mr. Blun looked ridiculously small beside her.

“ You have references, I suppose,” he asked.

“ Ay,” she answered shortly, looking down at him as if he were too small to give more words to.

“ Very good references ?” he asked again, and trying at the same time to make the most of his beside

“ Ay,” she said a second time.

“ You understand cooking in all its branches ?”

“ Ay.”

“ And you know how to help with the family washing, clear starching, polishing shirts, and all that ?”

The woman all at once lost her laconic manner of speaking.

“ Do you mean to do washing with the cooking ? I’ll let you know I’m no such haberdasher as that—if I understands cooking in all its branches, it isn’t to be hired as a common washerwoman, and the next time—” turning to the proprietor, “ you call me up to be spoken to, let me know whether it’s a gentleman or not that wants me.”

And she flounced back to the room from which she had been called.

The proprietor said blandly to Mr. Blun :

“ I am afraid it would be little use to call out any of the others, for she will have spoken of you in such a manner, that not one of them will care even to see you.”

Mr. Blun was very angry, but he only showed his anger by a freezing bow to the proprietor ; then he went to another intelligence office. Here, the first

woman who was called to speak to him, was short, stout, and she looked as if she knew her own worth very well.

She had good references, understood cooking—Mr. Blun said nothing about the branches this time—but she shook her head at the idea of having anything to do with the family washing.

“A cook as understands her business, sir, won’t consent to nothing that takes her away from her range, and I couldn’t on no account have my character destroyed by anything like that.”

And though the proprietor of this office, unlike the other proprietor, did not say what the woman would do when she returned to her companions, it seemed as if she must have done what the big woman in the other office had done, for when another person was told to see Mr. Blun, she said it was no use since he wanted one servant to do the work of two.

Mr. Blun left that office beginning to feel that his wife was not altogether wrong when she said it would be easier to get a cook if the cook were hired to do nothing more than the cooking.

But he tried a third office, and a smart looking middle aged woman was summoned from the inner room to see him.

Wanting to know at once how she felt about the two kinds of work, he spoke of that before he said a word of her knowledge of cooking, or asked about her reference and she said :

“You want the cook to help with the washing? well, how many in family have you, sir?”

“Six children and two grown people.”

“Six children,” she repeated aghast, “oh, I couldn’t go where there’s six children. Now, if there was one, or two, I mightn’t mind ; but six, sir, is entirely too many for any gentleman to have that wants the cook to do the washing.”

Mr. Blun was indignant ; such undisciplined, impertinent people he never had met, and it was with

difficulty he turned from the office without saying something strongly expressive of his feelings.

He looked at his watch and finding that his three calls in search of a cook had taken nearly double the time he had intended to give, he hurried back to the store, feeling as he went, not quite so decided about engaging an entirely new set of servants. So far as he knew, Jane had not violated his discipline ; there was no reason then to send her away, and being in that frame of mind when he went home it was not pleasant to be told by his wife in her easy way :

“I hope you have found a cook, Mr. Blun ;

“Jane does not like being in the kitchen, and as her month will be up in a week, and you said you were going to change all the help, I told her to be on the lookout for another place.”

“Mrs. Blun, I think it was one of the rules of my discipline when we went to housekeeping that *I* was to engage and dismiss the servants ; to tell them when they suited, and to notify them when they did not.”

“Yes, Mr. Blun ; and a very comfortable rule it was for me ; it saved me a great deal of trouble and bother.”

“Then, why have you broken the rule now ; why did you not leave it to me to tell Jane ?”

“On the principle of justice, Mr. Blun, and according to the example of fair warning which you set me last evening. Did you not tell me that Miss Rebecca Luxor would be set over this establishment if I did not attend to matters ?”

“Call Jane !” interrupted Mr. Blun, not wishing to hear anymore about Miss Luxor.

“I am sorry, Mr. Blun, that I can’t oblige you, but Jane is getting the dinner ; surely it would be against your discipline to take her from her duties now.”

Mrs. Blun’s easy manner and calm even tones were

exasperating, for against them her husband's discipline could do nothing. He said shortly :

"I shall see Jane after dinner."

After dinner, to Jane's own astonishment, as well as to the astonishment of her mistress, Mr. Blun, not alone asked her to keep her place, but he told her to send to his store the cook she knew who wanted a situation. Then he called Helen.

"Does the mother of one of your classmates do family washing?"

"Yes, papa:" said Helen, her eyes sparkling.

"Tell that classmate to send her mother to my store."

"Yes, papa;" said Helen again, and she never went to sleep with more satisfaction than she did that night thinking of what she should say to Nanny the next day.

CHAPTER XIX

“NANNY TAVISH, my father wants your mother to do our family washing ; you tell her to call at his store ; it’s number——Broadway,” pronouncing the number and the street with great emphasis.

Such was the manner in which Helen gave her father’s message to Nanny, and as it was just as the class had reached the yard for the morning recess, many of the girls heard it. Nanny felt as if a stone had struck her. She turned pale, then red ; so red that everything before her seemed to look red : but after that her proud little spirit asserted itself. She drew herself up, gave Helen Blun an indignant look, and walked away without saying a word. But Lizzie Morrell who had heard Helen, could not be silent. She said with as much anger as though Helen’s message had been delivered to her :

“You’re a mean thing, Helen Blun, and you just said that because you wanted to tell where your father’s store was. I know what kind of a store he keeps—a *tailor* store—he’s just a *tailor*—and is that any better than being a washerwoman, I’d like to know?” looking round at the girls who had gathered about her and Helen. Some of the girls answered :

“No,” and Lizzie went on with tantalizing contempt :

“Giving herself such airs when her father’s only a tailor.”

That was turning the tables most unexpectedly on Helen, and for a second she looked as if she did not

know what to do ; then, remembering that her father was a *merchant* tailor, she said quickly :

“My father isn’t any common tailor ; he’s a *gentleman* tailor,” gentleman seemed to her a better word than merchant.

“What kind of a tailor would he be if he wasn’t a gentleman tailor ?” laughed Lizzie. “He couldn’t be a woman tailor, could he ? He’s a man, isn’t he ?”

At which all the girls laughed, and Helen, becoming desperate, said back :

“Well, anyway, he’s not a feather bed tied in the middle, like your aunt is, as everybody saw on examination day, and he isn’t tied up in a red flannel bag like your uncle, and——”

She was cut short by Lizzie, who not able to bear that speech about her beloved uncle, sprang at Helen, but before she could do anything more Miss Robson came on the scene. It was Miss Robson’s week for duty in the yard, and she caught Lizzie by the shoulder and shook her.

“You little virago ; what class are you in ?”

“Miss Olden’s,” said Lizzie sullenly, and making a face at Helen, who now that she had a teacher to protect her stood looking as if she had been very much hurt by Lizzie.

“Miss Olden !” said Miss Robson, “she has the worst disciplined class in the whole school. Her girls are always doing something. You just report yourself to your teacher for disorder in the yard, and tell her to give you a debit.”

“Yes’m,” answered Lizzie, making another face at Helen.

On returning to the class room Helen waited only till the girls had taken their seats to raise her hand.

“What do you want, Helen Blun ? It seems to me you always want something just as I am ready to begin a lesson.”

“Miss Robson told Lizzie Morrell to report herself to you for disorder in the yard.”

"Oh, you mean tattle tale!" burst from Lizzie. "She didn't give me a chance to tell you, Miss Olden. I meant to report it this afternoon when I give in my marks, Miss Robson told me to take a debit—there!" and she turned and glared at Helen.

By this time half of the class had their hands up, and some of the girls too impatient to wait for permission to speak, began at once:

"Miss Robson said you had the worst disciplined class in the whole school; that your girls were always doing something."

Miss Olden trembling with anger rapped furiously with her ruler on the desk.

"Be quiet, every one of you, and you, Helen Blun, take your seat and put down your hand."

"But Lizzie Morrell was going to strike me only Miss Robson saved me," burst from Helen, determined that Miss Olden should know about Lizzie's dreadful conduct.

"Helen Blun, *will* you be quiet? and you, Lizzie may be excused from the debit Miss Robson gave you, because you told the truth. Take your slates, girls."

The girls took their slates, most of them a good deal puzzled by their teacher's ready pardon of Lizzie. Helen was very angry; Lizzie of course, was delighted, and within the next ten minutes she had managed to draw on her slate unseen by the teacher, a comical picture of a little, fat man sitting cross-legged, and sewing; underneath, she wrote:

"Mr. Blun, gentleman tailor." All the girls who saw the picture nearly choked in their efforts to keep from laughing aloud, and Helen, though she did not see the slate, felt they were laughing about her.

Nanny, however, happened to see the drawing, and what was written under it; her first thought was to enjoy it as the other girls were doing, and to feel glad that Helen was served so; then came the

recollection of what her mother often said to her about hurting people's feelings. But, it was hard to spare Helen's feelings when Helen did not care in the least to spare hers.

The struggle with herself became so violent, it brought the color into her cheeks, and made her breath come quickly. But, she conquered, and taking her slate rag she rubbed out the drawing, smiling at Lizzie, and shaking her head gently while she did so.

Before the day was over, some one told Helen Blun all about it; but instead of feeling thankful to Nanny, and ashamed of her conduct, she disliked Nanny still more, for being so much better than she was herself.

Nanny, however, was very happy for the victory she had gained, and she went home with such a pleasant face that her mother could not help kissing her a second time.

"Have things gone unusually well in school to-day, to make you look so bright?" she asked.

Nanny laughed, and told about the drawing and how she had rubbed it out, but she did not tell anything that had happened before that, excusing the omission to herself by thinking, that she did not want her mother to know how Helen Blun had hurt her feelings. But, she knew in her secret heart that was not the only, nor the chief reason for not telling. The true cause was, lest her mother, who, as Nanny knew sorely needed more work, might think of taking the Blun's washing.

Mrs. Tavish hearing nothing more than that Lizzie Morrell had made a contemptuous drawing of Mr. Blun, said:

"What an unkind little girl Lizzie Morrell must be to hurt any one's feelings like that."

Nanny's conscience troubled her.

"Lizzie isn't unkind," she said quickly, "she's the best girl in our class."

“But what you have just told me, Nanny—drawing such a picture—why should she do that?”

“Well, you see, Helen had said something about Lizzie’s uncle that Lizzie loves just as I love you, mamma, and Lizzie couldn’t stand that.”

“But, you didn’t tell me that, Nanny, and even in that case, I should like Lizzie better if she had not made that drawing and I am so glad my own little daughter rubbed it out. Proud and happy as you made me on examination day, you make me much prouder and happier whenever you do a kind action.”

The praise seemed to burn Nanny. If her mother but knew that it was by taking Nanny’s part Lizzie had caused Helen to say what she did her mother would not then think that Lizzie was so unkind. But if Nanny told all, her mother might take the washing; so she did not tell, but she became very unhappy; so unhappy that her mother at length noticed the change.

“What is the matter, Nanny?” she asked. “You look so different from what you did when you came in. Are you sick?”

“No ma’am,” answered Nanny, forcing herself to smile, and beginning to arrange her books as an excuse to keep her face from her mother’s sight.

The little girl’s conscience was sick because of the wrong she had done to Lizzie; and when bed time came and she was ready for her mother’s good night kiss, she could bear it no longer. She threw herself on her mother’s breast and sobbed out all that she had not told, even to her fear that Mrs. Tavish would take the washing of the Bluns.

Mrs. Tavish kissed her little daughter several times before she answered; then she said very gently:

“It would have been something that I would not think you could do, if you had gone to bed without telling me all the truth about Lizzie Morrell. You see, it makes her out quite a different girl from what

I thought. Now, my dear, let the pain which this keeping back of part of the truth, has given you, make you all the more careful in future to be just to everybody, no matter what pain it gives yourself. Never keep back part of the truth, Nanny, when by so doing you place another in an unfair light.

Then, without saying a word of the Blun washing, Mrs. Tavish kissed Nanny good night, and turned away. The little girl sprang up.

"Mamma, you haven't said anything about taking the washing for the Bluns."

Mrs. Tavish turned back to the bed-side.

"No; because it would pain you very much if I did."

"Would it help you a great deal, mamma? Do you need it very badly?"

"It would help a good deal, dear, for I have so little work now, everybody going to the country; but never mind about it," and Mrs. Tavish turned away again.

But Nanny did mind about it, feeling all the worse because of her mother's loving consideration for her, and instead of going to sleep at once, she began to think whether it would be such a dreadful thing if her mother were to work for the Bluns. To be sure, Helen would tell it to everybody in the class, and the thought of the contempt the girls might have for her made her hide her face in the bed clothes.

She fell asleep at length, still fighting with herself, and she dreamed about it all night.

In the morning the struggle began again, and she almost wished that her mother would give her an opportunity to say she would not mind if she did take the Blun washing.

But Mrs. Tavish said nothing, and Nanny could not bring herself to speak first about it.

On the evening before Helen Blun had been asked by her father if the mother of her classmate was going to call at his store as he had ordered.

“ I don’t know,” Helen answered, somewhat frightened lest he should blame her for not bringing him a direct answer. “ I told her to tell her mother.”

She did not dare to say how Nanny had received the message, lest her father might think she had not given it in a proper manner. She knew, as well as Mrs. Blun did, “ putting on airs,” or boasting, was dreadfully against Mr. Blun’s discipline.

“ Ask her about it, to-morrow,” he said, “ and bring me a decided answer ; it will not be enough if the woman should not call, I must know her intentions.”

Helen said :

“ Yes sir.”

But the next day in school she was afraid to speak to Nanny, so she tore a fly leaf out of her geography when Miss Olden was not looking, and wrote :

“ My father wants to know if your mother will do our washing ?”

At recess she put the note into Nanny’s hand, and waited while she read it.

Nanny’s struggle with herself had been going on all the morning, so that she was rather glad to get the note ; it gave her an opportunity of doing what she felt was right, without having the humiliation of speaking to Helen first, and she said in a low tone :

“ I shall tell my mother this afternoon, and she will go to see your father to-morrow.”

Helen, to her own surprise, found herself saying “ thank you,” as she turned away, and when she joined her companions she did not seem to have any wish to tell them what had just passed between herself and Nanny. Somehow, Nanny’s look and manner had made her feel as if it were Nanny who were doing her a favor.

Nanny, now that she had done what she felt to be her duty, wished ardently for the hour of dismissal, and when it came she ran home without waiting for the usual brief play in the yard.

She reached her mother’s presence out of breath.

“Mamma, I’ve told Helen Blun, that you would go to see her father to-morrow about the washing.”

Then she hid her face in her mother’s lap, and sobbed from the very reaction of her feelings.

Mrs. Tavish, soothing her at first by caresses, said in her fond, gentle way :

“Tell me all about it ; how did you come to say that to Helen ?”

Nanny told her, describing the long struggle she had with herself, and how Helen had delivered her father’s message in a much more polite manner.

“I suppose I was awful proud, yesterday,” she went on, “but I couldn’t help it ; it sounds so, you know when the girls say, ‘her mother is a washer-woman’, and I’m proud about it yet, too. It hurts awful to think that they’ll all know you’re Helen Blun’s washerwoman, for she’ll tell them. But, I’ve made up my mind not to care,” straightening herself a little, and then lowering her voice and looking away from her mother’s face, “when I think how it’s for me you’re working so hard and how you were willing not to take the washing because it would make me feel bad, oh, mamma, it seems as if I never would have another proud thought,” and her tears came afresh.

“My own noble little daughter,” said Mrs. Tavish, and then she waited for the child to become quite calm, before she said :

“If I get this work, dear, it will seem like special help sent to us, for two gentlemen whose washing I expected to have all summer are going away at the end of this week, and if Mr. Blun’s family do not go into the country in August——”

“They don’t,” interrupted Nanny, “for the other day when the girls were talking about vacation and the country, one of them asked Helen where she was going, and she tossed her head and said :

‘We never go to the country because my mamma thinks it’s common’” “and Lizzie Morrell laughed

and said it was 'sour grapes,' and then nearly all the girls laughed, and Helen tossed her head again, and said it *was* because her mamma thought it common."

"I think both Helen and Lizzie are to be pitied. You don't take part in any of these things, Nanny."

"Never, mamma ; but I can't help hearing them, and I can't help being glad when Lizzie takes Helen down. And a good many of the other girls are glad too. We all think if it wasn't for Lizzie, Helen would put on a good many more airs."

"Well, dear ; try to think as kindly as you can of Helen, and when she gets older and has learned more, she may lose all this unpleasant manner, and now, we won't talk about her any more."

"But you'll go to Mr. Blun's store, to-morrow ?"

"Yes."

Neither mother nor daughter spoke of the Bluns again.

As soon as Nanny went to school the next morning, Mrs. Tavish started for the merchant tailor's establishment. She found it easily, and she was met by Mr. Blun himself. Her manner pleased him ; he thought she was a woman of great self discipline, and writing something on a card he told her to take it at once to Mrs. Blun. Mrs. Tavish thought Mr. Blun was a very odd man, and when she saw Mrs. Blun she wondered how the two had ever become husband and wife.

"You are the washerwoman my husband has engaged," Mrs. Blun said, reading the card. "he has made the terms with you, of course?"

"Yes ;" replied Mrs. Tavish. "Well, so far as I'm concerned, I have only one thing to say ; that is, I want my skirts very stiff—you understand?"

"Yes," said Mrs. Tavish again and then Mrs. Blun called Jane to do up the bundle.

"Most of the married ladies I have washed for," said Mrs. Tavish to herself as she went home, "wanted to have their husband's shirts done up nicely,

but all Mrs. Blun cared about was her own skirts."

She said nothing to Nanny, however, more than that Mr. Blun had agreed to pay what she asked, and that as the family would not go to the country she was fortunate to get the work.

Helen could not go on keeping from her classmates the fact that Nanny's mother had actually got to be the Blun family washerwoman, but she did not tell it in Nanny's hearing, partly because of vague fear as to what Nanny might say or do in return, and partly because she was positively afraid of the manner in which Lizzie took Nanny's part. And the girls to whom Helen told it, talked of it among themselves, and pretended to each other to have a sort of contempt for Nanny because her mother was the washerwoman of one of their classmates. They never showed to the little girl herself anything that could hurt her feelings ; her own gentle manners, as well as her readiness to do them any little service in her power, prevented that.

Vacation was drawing near, and lessons and discipline were not so strict, everybody feeling that the hard work of the year deserved such relaxation. Even Miss Amer was not so stern, and Miss Tibbetty did not find fault when the order in the main room was disturbed by the turning of eyes and the moving of heads.

All this helped Miss Olden to recover somewhat from her unhappy feelings about the examination, and to make her soften even to Miss Robson. She softened so much that on the last day when the teachers were having ice cream and cake at recess, amid such a noise of tongues it was almost equal to the noise in the play ground, and everybody seemed too happy to contain herself, Miss Olden stole up to Miss Robson, and said :

"Are you going to spend your vacation in Vermont as you did last year?"

Her answer was the stoniest look from Miss Rob-

son ; it prevented Miss Olden from saying anything more, and she turned as red as the roses in the tumbler on the table, and went back to her place.

Miss Robson at once resumed her gay remarks, adding, as she saw in some of the faces about her, looks of pity for Miss Olden.

“ Anybody who makes a false charge against me once, shall never do it again, and to make sure that such calumny cannot occur a second time, I cease all acquaintance with that person.”

Everybody present had heard more than once, Miss Robson’s account of what had taken place between her and Miss Olden ; it was an account that made Miss Robson appear as an angel of kindness to Miss Olden, and Miss Olden as guilty of black ingratitude to Miss Robson.

And as Miss Olden was not hardened enough to continue putting the blame of the failure of her class away from herself, and on the other teacher, but rather, in the troubled state of her conscience blamed herself entirely.

Miss Robson’s account had been generally believed.

At this time, however, when they were going to be separated for some weeks, and no one knew whether they should all meet again, it did seem to the more Christian-hearted as if Miss Robson were carrying her spirit of anger too far : and these good souls were bold enough to say so, but with no effect so far as that resolute young woman was concerned—with no effect even after they themselves had gone up to Miss Olden and kissed her, and whispered to her not to feel badly.

But Miss Olden did feel very unhappy at being treated in such a manner, and when her own thoughts were so kindly.

When she returned to her class room it was with difficulty she kept from crying. If but the curtain of her life would have rolled up a little, and she

could have seen how grotesquely fate was going to change the situations of her and Miss Robson she would have laughed instead of cried.

At the hour of dismissal every one of Miss Olden's forty pupils kissed her, some of them shyly, most of them warmly, and with a look in their little faces that told alone of their love and good will.

Her impatience, her anger, the punishments she had inflicted, the injustice of which—under the sore pressure of injustice done to herself—she had been guilty, were all forgotten, and her heart still aching from Miss Robson's cruel rebuff, felt all the more these touching little signs of affection.

But it was Lizzie Morrell who touched her most. She had punished Lizzie oftener than any girl in the class; she had scolded her every day, and sometimes many times in the day, except the occasion on which she had excused her from the debit Miss Robson had given, she could not think of a single time that she had not made Lizzie suffer the full penalty of her misdeeds. Yet, here was Lizzie now, not only throwing her arms around Miss Olden's neck, and kissing her affectionately, but when she had taken her arms away pulling out of her pocket a little worsted lamp mat.

"I made it myself, for you," she said, and then as if very much ashamed she darted out of the room.

Some of the girls had brought presents to Miss Olden that morning, but they had put them with a good deal of show on her table so that the whole class could see them, and Miss Olden had thanked them; but not one of the gifts touched her like this simple little one from Lizzie, made by Lizzie's self.

She wrapped it up carefully and when she went home she put it under the lamp that she used in her own room. Lizzie had fringed it with bright yellow worsted, and somehow, as Miss Olden looked at it,—the fringe being the only part to be seen out-

side the lamp,—she felt as if she had changed her mind about having a good cry.

The bright color together with the loving, forgiving spirit of the child, seemed like a promise of something bright in the future, and instead of sitting down and thinking how miserable she was, she put on her bonnet and went out to make a call on a friend.

CHAPTER XX.

THE very thought of freedom from school for five weeks was enough to delight even the children who could not go to the country.

Mr. Blun regarded going to the country for the summer as more fashionable than necessary, consequently it would be against his discipline to indulge his family in such folly.

Yet Mrs. Blun was accustomed to say to her neighbors that the reason she did not go to the country, was because it was so common, a reason that her neighbors who went to the country resented behind her back. And though Helen gave the same reason to her classmates, and gave it with an excellent imitation of her mother's manner in giving it, she wished with all her heart that they were permitted to change the scene like their neighbors.

On the last day Helen threw her books down with a little envious sigh of the Pops next door who had departed that very morning for the Catskill Mountains. Then, as she went to look for Jane to get her some bread and milk, she heard Susie and Arden quarreling on the floor above, and the new nurse, the third engaged by Mr. Blun since Catharine went away, vainly trying to make peace.

At length it came to a hand to hand fight in which sides seemed to be taken by all the children, and the screaming and the shuffling of feet, mingled with the shrill voice of the nurse, filled the whole house.

Mrs. Blun rushed out of the back parlor where

she had been reading, boxed Arden's ears, gave a slap to Walter, another to Susie, shook Lulu, and then she said to the nurse, a large, good natured looking woman :

"It does seem, Maggie, as if you might at least keep those children quiet."

"Indeed, mum, it would take more than me to keep them quiet ; they act as if they were possessed the whole tribe of them."

Mrs. Blun called over the baluster.

"Has Helen come in yet?"

"Yes ma'am," answered Jane who was pouring out a goblet of milk for the little girl.

"Then, tell her to come up at once, and help to keep these children quiet."

Mrs. Blun went back to her book.

Helen made a face.

"I won't go," she said sullenly. "I can't do a thing, nor have a minute to myself with those tire-some children, and I suppose all vacation it'll be, 'Helen, keep those children quiet, Helen, stay with those children.'"

Jane had to turn aside to hide her amusement at the little girl's clever mimicry of Mrs. Blun's tone and words.

"I declare, it's just awful," she went on, gulping down her bread and milk, "but I won't go," she repeated, looking at Jane as if she expected Jane to say something. In a moment, however, the whole troop came rushing down the stairs, and out through the hall to the yard, the nurse in mad pursuit.

They led her a lively chase, and the sight of such a big woman running after the children brought the new cook, Jane's friend, to the kitchen window where she laughed loud enough to be heard on the floor above.

Walter and Arden as nimble as monkeys had climbed to the top of the summer house, and there they sat crowing like two roosters. Susie had fled

like a hare ; Maggie could not get even within touching distance of her, while Lulu who had toddled after the party stood clapping her hands and saying :

“ ‘Oo tant tetch ’em—’oo know ’oo tant.’ ”

Jane, attracted by the cook’s laugh, had gone to see the fun, but Helen, knowing that Maggie would expect her to obey her mother’s order, remained quietly at her bread and milk.

Maggie, finding it useless to try to catch any of them, gave up the chase, and dripping with perspiration and panting, she went into the kitchen.

“ ‘They’re not children,’ ” she said, when she got back her breath, “ ‘they’re imps, and I’ll not stay ; I’d rather be on my knees scrubbing from morning till night than minding them. I’ll tell himself so, when he comes home.’ ”

And she did tell “himself,” as soon as he came home, adding :

“ ‘I’d like to go as soon as my week is up,’ ”—she had been in the house three days—“ ‘for the children have strained my nerves so that I shall need a rest before I take another place.’ ”

“ ‘Very well,’ ” Mr. Blun answered shortly, and then he went up to have it out with Mrs. Blun.

Mrs. Blun was trying on a fancy head dress. She had made it from an imported pattern which she had borrowed, and she was so engaged with it, she did not do more than glance at her husband when he entered, and she said in answer to his stern reproof :

“ ‘Well, Mr. Blun, you don’t hire the right kind of servants. You see, you’re a man, and a man has so little judgment. Do you think that blue is becoming, or would it look prettier just to bunch the lace so ?’ ” and with one hand holding a frill of lace against her hair, she turned and faced him.

“ ‘Mrs. Blun, this is not a time to question me about your vanities. I have come up here, to call you to account for your wicked want of discipline in your family, after all my late orders to you.’ ”

"I know that's what you came up for," turning back to the glass again, "but I am so tired Blun, dear, of your eternal discipline."

"Mrs. Blun!"

Mr. Blun fairly thundered her name and his wife started.

"Discipline *shall* be maintained in this house," and then as if afraid to trust himself to say more, he turned and left the room.

Mrs. Blun made a face at herself in the glass which she meant for her husband, and then she said to herself :

"I wonder what he'll do now, to maintain his discipline; something horridly disagreeable I suppose; but there's one thing, he will hardly dare to bring that Rebecca Luxor here."

Fate, however, was even then conspiring to make Miss Luxor a member of the Blun family. The mail of the very next morning brought a letter from that lady to Mr. Blun.

The friend Miss Luxor had made her home with, had died, and her own means had failed.

"I only write to you, my dear nephew," the letter went on, "to ask you to get me work of some kind. Perhaps you may be able to employ me in your own family; if so, do not hesitate because of my feelings. I assure you, I have no foolish sensitiveness.

"My fifty years in the world have taught me that honest work is always respectable, no matter what it may be, nor how sneered at by thoughtless people. I *can* work as you know; do all kinds of housework, plain sewing, plain cooking, and I flatter myself from my fondness for children, that I might even make a good nurse. My education of course, is too plain to be of much help to your children in that respect, but I could help to educate them morally. I know something of your wife, and I do not forget that the only time she ever saw me she did not seem to be

pleased with me, and that she took no pains to hide her displeasure.

“Time, however, may have softened her feelings and more especially now, when she finds that it is a poor, needy, old woman, willing to work for her bread, who makes this appeal.

“Let me have an answer as soon as possible.

“Your affectionate aunt,

“REBECCA LUXOR.”

That letter to Mr. Blun’s mind, was a settlement of the difficulty of getting another nurse for the children. Since Miss Luxor had no feeling about the kind of work she did, she could take at once the situation, and Mrs. Blun could not say anything against that. Before answering the letter, however, he took it home and read it to his wife.

“I won’t have her,” she said at once, feeling in her inmost soul that Miss Luxor being Mr. Blun’s own aunt, would become a sort of spy in the household.

“Then, Mrs. Blun, I, feeling it to be my duty to assist this needy old woman, shall send to her every month the wages I have been paying to a nurse, and you, Mrs. Blun, shall take the nurse’s place yourself.”

Mrs. Blun began to reflect. She knew that her husband would keep his word and for her to have the care and annoyance of the children, was not to be thought of. Then, if Miss Luxor came, she probably would be worried out of the situation as the other nurses had been, or perhaps, being Mr. Blun’s aunt, the utter want of order in the family would disgust her. So, Mrs. Blun changed her mind about Miss Luxor, and so informed her husband. He wrote at once to his aunt, and the very day that Maggie went, Miss Luxor came.

Miss Luxor was not much taller than Helen, and she was very slight, and very straight. Her dress, though it was summer time, was of woollen goods, the pattern

being a very large brown fig leaf on a black ground. Around her wrinkled neck she wore a broad band of black velvet fastened at the throat with a big silver pin. Her gray hair was thick on her head, but too short to make more than a very little coil at the back, and it was drawn so high, it stood up like a topknot, with all sorts of little short hairs sticking out from it. She wore spectacles, and she had many wrinkles, but she had also a most kindly expression, and a very cheerful manner.

To Mrs. Blun's disgust, this little, queerly dressed woman seemed to win the children at once.

One small old-fashioned box bound with iron came with her, and that held all she owned.

As it was about noon when she arrived, Mr. Blun was not there to welcome her, and Mrs. Blun was not at all warm in her welcome; but Miss Luxor did not seem to mind that. She tried at once to make friends with the children, none of whom had ever seen her before.

After luncheon Mrs. Blun took her to the nursery, the children remaining in the dining room to tell what they thought to each other.

"She's jolly nice," said Arden.

"I like her a heap better'n than Maggie, or Annie, or Julia, or Ellen, or Catharine," said Walter.

"And she's our aunt," said Susie, "papa said so last night when he told us she was coming to-day."

"Yes; so he did; Aunt Rebecca," said Walter.

"Aunt Rebecca!" repeated Helen contemptuously, and giving her head a little toss, "the idea of calling the *nurse*, Aunt Rebecca; mamma says it would be ridiculous, and I think so too: I'll just call her Rebecca."

"You proud thing," said Walter, "isn't an aunt, an aunt, if she *is* a nurse? I'm going to call her Aunt Rebecca. Won't you Arden?"

"Of course I shall," said Arden manfully, "And you will too, Susie, won't you?" said Walter to his six year old sister.

"I don't know," said Susie doubtfully, "I guess I'll do like Helen."

"You will, will you?" said Walter, feeling that it was Susie's duty to accede to his wishes rather than to Helen's, and to make her perform her duty—he began to pinch and slap her. Susie screamed to Helen for help, Arden ran to assist Walter, and Lulu toddled to lend her little aid to her sisters. Thus there was another fight among the children, the third that day, and as it was going on in the dining room Jane had to interfere lest the dishes on the table should be broken.

When Mr. Blun came home that evening, he settled the vexed question—without hearing how the children had discussed it,—by saying to his wife:

"Of course, Mrs. Blun, you introduced all the children to their Aunt Rebecca?"

Miss Luxor being present, Mrs. Blun said nothing, and her husband took her silence as assent. Neither did Miss Luxor say anything, but Walter remarked boldly:

"I told them all, papa, that if she was our nurse she was our aunt, too, and that we must all call her Aunt Rebecca."

Aunt Rebecca gave the boy a smile that went to his little heart, and then his father delighted him by saying:

"That's right my boy, and such a speech shows your self discipline is as it should be."

Mrs. Blun felt as if she could have throttled the boy.

Days passed and Miss Luxor did not become disgusted as Mrs. Blun had supposed; on the contrary she seemed to get on better and better with the children. There were fewer quarrels among them, and Jane said to the cook that the little, old-fashioned body was the best nurse the Blun family ever had. Both Jane and the cook were aware that the nurse was Mr. Blun's aunt, Mr. Blun himself having told them, but Miss Luxor never presumed on

her relationship, nor did she in Mrs. Blun's presence ever show that she thought herself anything more than the nurse for the children. Mrs. Blun always acted in a manner to show that *she* thought Miss Luxor was Rebecca, the servant and nothing more. Helen, following her mother's example, did the same, though in her father's presence she had to be very careful never to omit the prefix Aunt, when she mentioned Miss Luxor's name ; and as Helen, having a room to herself, was not obliged to be so much with the nurse, she did not, unfortunately for herself, come so much under the nurse's influence.

The other children had grown quickly to like the new comer ; she told them quaint, simple stories that charmed them, she taught them games to take the place of their mischievous pranks, and when they did anything wrong, instead of impatiently scolding and punishing them to the limit of her authority, or threatening to tell their father, she had a way of reasoning with them, and putting them on their honor for future good conduct, that seemed to be wonderfully successful. She even romped with them at times, when there was no fear of disturbing any one, and she knew how to make and mend kites, to compel tops to spin at the very first go, to bat a ball without ever missing it, to cut out paper men and women in such a way that they would stand up wherever you put them, to make cat's cradles, tie sailor knots, make imitation dogs and cats and rabbits, and altogether, she seemed to be able to do so many things, that Arden said to her one day in his delighted admiration.

"Aunt Rebecca, was you ever a boy?"

"No, dear ;" she answered laughing in the hearty way that never failed to set the children laughing also.

"I never was a boy."

"Well ; who teached you, then, to do all the things like the boys does 'em?"

Having smilingly corrected the boy's mistakes in grammar, she went on to tell them that for many

years, she had lived in the house with five little boys and three little girls, and from them she had learned many of the things she did for the Bluns.

As the weeks wore on Mrs. Blun was not unconscious of the wonderful influence of the nurse over the children, except Helen, even to the fact of winning their affection. Walter would have fought anybody who dared to say a word against the nurse, and in his presence even his mother had to be careful how she spoke of Miss Luxor, and Helen did not dare to make fun of her aunt's old fashioned dress. This wonderful influence saved Mrs. Blun a great deal of trouble and annoyance; it also gave her much more time for her dress, her visits, and her novel reading, and so long as Miss Luxor did not meddle with Mrs. Blun's affairs, Mrs. Blun did not object to her presence in the house.

She soon found out another advantage of Miss Luxor's presence in the house, for that lady, without being asked, spent her leisure during the day, and sometimes even took hours from the night, to mend, or turn, and even to make garments for the children.

Such economy—Mrs. Blun took care not to inform her husband of it, and Aunt Rebecca did not seem to think it worth speaking about—enabled Mrs. Blun to put more money into her private purse, but for all that not a word of praise, or even of kindness did she speak of the nurse.

Mr. Blun also, could not help noting the good effect of Aunt Rebecca's influence, though he had much less opportunity of seeing it, and he said that it was owing to her being a woman of discipline.

"A woman of discipline," mocked Mrs. Blun, "it is owing to her being a woman of want. She has a good home here, and she knows it, and of course she's doing all she can to keep it."

Mr. Blun repeated :

"I tell you, Mrs. Blun. it is because she is a woman of discipline," and then being near the door he hurried out so that she could not contradict him.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE vacation seemed to begin well for Lizzie Morrell. Her uncle was so much better that, with the help of a cane he could walk a little about the room, and owing to the care with which Lizzie kept her promise to try to bear with Mrs. Morrell, there were fewer unpleasant scenes in the house.

The vacation pleasures that Lizzie looked forward to, were the reading of fairy tales to Dad, making her sketches, and going often to the window of a picture gallery on Broadway; the engraving of an infant's head was in the window and Lizzie was trying to copy it.

In order to keep Mrs. Morrell in good temper, Lizzie, without waiting to be told to do so, helped to sweep, and dust, and wash dishes, and she went on errands so quickly that Thimig catching a sight of her sometimes, said to himself on one occasion:

"She's just like one of them ere fairy things a fellow reads about, only I don't know as any fairy 'd have such eyes."

This voluntary help with the housework, left Mrs. Morrell nothing to scold about, except that Bartholomew should let Lizzie read such stuff to him, and gallivant the streets, as Mrs. Morrell called Lizzie's visits to the window of the picture gallery.

Mrs. Morrell herself often "gallivanted," the streets and for the purpose of looking into shop windows, but, she said the windows she looked into held

sensible things such as the fashions, and not the tomfoolery of pictures that Lizzie wasted her time gazing at.

But Mrs. Morrell bore even with that till two weeks of the vacation had passed, and she saw Lizzie getting ready to go out one afternoon ; then she said :

“It would be a good deal better Lizzie, for you to take the needle in your hand than be going out like this every day. Your uncle is a very foolish man to let you do it.”

“He isn’t,” burst from Lizzie. and then vexed with herself for having said even that much, she hurried out of the house.

It seemed the harder that Mrs. Morrell should have spoken so now, when her copy of the engraving in the window was nearly done. An hour’s work would finish it, and she was going to the window of the gallery this afternoon in order to fix the picture still better in her mind.

When she reached the window and had almost glued her face against it so as to get the very closest look, she saw all at once a sign hung just above it, which said :

“Lessons given in crayon drawing ; inquire in the gallery.”

Quick as a flash she turned about and fled homeward. Did not her uncle say she should have such lessons, and here was a place where she could get them, and the place where she had seen so many beautiful pictures in the window.

As she turned a corner of one of the streets near her home, she saw at some distance a little girl coming towards her and carrying a large, and seemingly heavy clothes basket.

It must be heavy, Lizzie thought, for the little girl stopped often and put the basket down to rest herself.

Lizzie pitied the little girl, and forgetting how anxious she had been to get home quickly, she ran to

help her, finding with surprise that it was Nanny Tavish.

“Nanny,” she said when she reached her, “I didn’t dream it was you.”

Nanny had put the basket down again, this time on one of the steps of a house, and she sat down beside it as if she had no more strength to go on. Her face was very pale and it had a look of pain and sadness that went to Lizzie’s heart.

“Is anything the matter?” Lizzie asked, sitting down beside Nanny.

“Yes, my mother is sick,” and Nanny looked as if she wanted very much to cry but by a great effort kept herself from doing so.

“And you had to bring these clothes home?” said Lizzie, “well, I’ll help you to carry them; they are too heavy for you.”

She jumped up and took the basket as if she meant to carry it all by herself.

Nanny also jumped up; Lizzie’s kind offer seemed all at once to have made her strong again.

“I am much obliged,” she said, her face getting red, “but I am rested now, and I can carry it.”

“Well, I’m going to help you,” said Lizzie again catching the basket in such a manner that most of its weight must fall upon herself, and Nanny feeling much relieved and very thankful said nothing more. But, as they walked quietly along with the basket between them, she thought she ought to talk a little to Lizzie—Lizzie’s natural delicacy kept her from asking even where they were going, though from the direction they were taking she thought it might be to Helen Blun’s house—so Nanny said:

“My mother has a very bad sore on her back, and it’s made her so sick she isn’t able to do anything at all to-day. If she hadn’t ironed these clothes yesterday, I don’t know what she’d have done. And she promised to bring them home to-day, but of course, she couldn’t, and there wasn’t anybody to

send but me. She didn't think I'd be able to carry them but I coaxed her to let me try, because—because—” she stopped, feeling too proud to go on, but after a moment, she said bravely : “because we need the money that's to be paid for them, and I shall tell my mother how kind you were, Lizzie to help me.”

“Oh, that isn't anything,” said Lizzie quickly.

They were turning into the handsome street where Helen Blun lived, and there stood Helen herself with three other little girls directly in the way of Nanny and Lizzie. The girls were some of Helen's little neighbors who went to private schools, and so they did not know any of Helen's school-mates.

They stepped aside to let the two girls pass, looking at them with much curiosity and a feeling of great superiority. Helen looked as if Nanny and Lizzie were as much strangers to her as they were to her companions, and Nanny seeing that, gave no sign that she knew Helen.

Lizzie, however, could not follow Nanny's example, and she said wickedly.

“Don't you know us in vacation, Helen?”

“Who are they?” asked a couple of the little private school girls both speaking at the same time. Helen, angry and ashamed said loud enough for Nanny and Lizzie to hear :

“One of them, the one on this side is our washerwoman's daughter.”

Lizzie turned shortly bringing Nanny to a sudden stop as she did so, and flung back.

“Why don't you say too, that your washerwoman's daughter is the smartest girl in your class, and that she did a heap better than *you* did, examination day? why don't you say that, Helen Blun?”

Helen retreated to an area, saying angrily to her companions who followed her, that Lizzie Morrell was the worst girl in the whole school, and that was the reason she didn't notice her; her mamma wanted her never to notice such girls.

“And the other girl?” asked one of Helen’s companions, “is she a bad girl, too?” you acted as if you never saw her before.”

“No ; she isn’t as bad as Lizzie Morrell, but she’s only the washerwoman’s daughter, and my mamma doesn’t want me to notice anybody like that ; she isn’t my equal.”

“But she’s in your class in school,” said the little girl again, “and that other little girl said she was the smartest one in your class.”

“Do you believe what that other girl says after what I told you ; I told you Lizzie Morrell was the worst girl in the whole school. Our teacher had to punish her every day.”

“Well,” said another of Helen’s companions, “I’m glad *I* don’t go to a public school ; you have to be in the same class with all sorts of poor children there.”

Helen turned very red, not knowing how to answer that, and just then one of the girls who had gone out to the walk to look after the two with the basket, said quickly :

“Come here, Helen Blun ; your washerwoman’s daughter is talking to a lady in front of your house. Who is she ?”

Helen hurried from the area, and saw Miss Ingoldsby talking to Nanny. Lizzie, finding that the basket would remain without any help from her on the step where she and Nanny had placed it when they met the lady, went away almost to the curb, feeling with her instinctive sense of delicacy, that it would not be good manners to stay where she could hear what the lady said.

Miss Ingoldsby had come from Newport two days before with both of her brothers in order to look at a house that Egbert wanted to buy, and Egbert had said that Cornelia should remain in the city long enough to make a visit to the Bluns ; also, that she should make the visit alone, for in that way

she might be able to talk more freely to Mrs. Blun.

Edwin was very angry at the proposal, but he did not dare to show his feelings only to Cornelia, and he scolded her till she was miserable. Thinking of that, and thinking also how Edwin's parting words to her, as she was leaving the hotel to go to Mr. Blun's house, were to be very careful and have no Tavish business with the Blun girl, it was annoying to meet Nanny. In her mingled astonishment, fear, and annoyance, she hardly saw Lizzie Morrell.

"Nanny Tavish," she said, "is it possible!" and then her naturally kind heart led her to put out her hand.

But Nanny, remembering Miss Ingoldsby's treatment the last time they met, gave her hand very unwillingly, and she did not seem at all glad to meet the lady.

Miss Ingoldsby felt it, and she flushed, but she said again very kindly :

"Are these clothes for this house? does your mother wash for Mrs. Blun?"

"Yes;" replied Nanny.

"How is your mother?"

"She is sick," replied Nanny briefly, as if she resented the asking of such questions.

But Miss Ingoldsby said more kindly than ever :

"Sick; my poor little girl! how sorry I am for you both. She is not very sick, I hope. I wish I could go to see her, but since I cannot, you must take this to her," opening her portmonnaie and taking out a bill.

"Please ma'am, I can't take it." The decision in the child's voice astonished the lady, and for a second she looked as if she did not know what to do with the bill: then, she tried to force the money into Nanny's hand, saying :

"You *must* take it; it is for your mother."

But Nanny shut her hand tightly against the

money and she drew her little figure up while she said just as she did before :

“ Please ma’am ; I can’t take it.”

Miss Ingoldsby felt almost angry. She said shortly :

“ Very well,” and then putting the bill back in her pocket-book, she went up the steps and rang the bell without again looking at Nanny.

Nanny took up her basket and went to the basement door.

Mrs. Blun was very much surprised to see Miss Ingoldsby, but she was also very much delighted. Such a visit seemed to be a sure sign that she would be invited to a party by Miss Ingoldsby, when the family came to town.

Miss Ingoldsby explained at once that her visit must be brief, and she asked to see the children. That request disappointed Mrs. Blun, for having the young lady all to herself she was eager to ask many questions about society, but, she rang for Rebecca to bring the children to the parlor, and while waiting for them she tried to improve the opportunity by asking Miss Ingoldsby about Newport, the people who went to Newport, and the parties Miss Ingoldsby’s family would be likely to give during the winter.

But the young lady said very little more than, “ yes,” and “ no,” and she looked all the time as if she were thinking of something very different. She was thinking of Nanny Tavish and her annoyance at having met the child she felt angry with everybody, herself and Mrs. Blun included. It was only when Miss Luxor and the children came in, that she seemed to get control of her feelings.

The little, odd, old-fashioned nurse had on the same dress with the big fig leaf pattern that she had worn on the day of her arrival. To Miss Ingoldsby it looked as ancient as the brocaded wedding dress of her great grandmother which was kept in a glass

case and had come down to the young lady as one of her mother's family heir looms.

The same broad band of black velvet fastened with the silver pin was round the nurse's neck, and her gray hair was twisted into the same little comical looking topknot. She stood at a little distance while Miss Ingoldsby was greeting the children, and as she saw how delighted they all were to see the visitor, her own face beamed with pleasure.

Mrs. Blun took no notice of the nurse. She was not going to tell Miss Ingoldsby that she was Mr. Blun's aunt.

But Mrs. Blun had made a wrong reckoning, for Walter pulled the nurse forward, saying :

"Here's Aunt Rebecca, Miss Ingoldsby ; that is she's papa's aunt, and then of course, she's our aunt. Papa says so, and she's a jolly good aunt."

Aunt Rebecca getting a little red under her wrinkles, made an old-fashioned courtesy, and smiled so much she showed both rows of her strong, white, carefully kept teeth. The smile, and the gentle, kind expression in the large eyes looking over the heavy framed spectacles, pleased Miss Ingoldsby, and she bowed and smiled also.

Mrs. Blun made up her mind that the next time she sent for the children to come to the parlor, either Walter, or Aunt Rebecca should stay behind.

Miss Ingoldsby asked for Helen, but before Helen's mother could answer, Walter said :

"Helen's out : she doesn't play with us any more. She says we aint no fit company for her because we call our nurse, aunt."

"Walter !" almost shrieked Mrs. Blun, both angry and ashamed, while Miss Ingoldsby feeling that her departure just then would be a relief to both ladies, rose, gracefully excusing herself, and took her leave.

Helen, having looked after both Miss Ingoldsby and Nanny till Miss Ingoldsby had gone up the steps, and Nanny had gone into the area, made up her mind

not to return to the house till the lady had gone.

She was astonished that Miss Ingoldsby should know Nanny, and it made her feel uncomfortable ; thinking Nanny was like herself, she was afraid of the things Nanny might say about her, and lest some one should be sent into the street to look for her, she coaxed her companions to take a long walk.

Miss Ingoldsby went down the steps of Mr. Blun's house feeling very much dissatisfied with herself. She looked about her and even peered sharply into the basement area as if with some hope or thought of again seeing Nanny Tavish ; Nanny's companion she had quite forgotten. She had not asked Mrs. Blun anything about Mrs. Tavish, lest in some way she might betray her own interest in Mrs. Tavish's child, and that would be breaking her promise to Edwin ; but, she felt more than usually vexed that Edwin should require from her the promises he did, and she was angry with herself that she did not have the courage to rebel. She was also angry at the proud way Nanny had acted, and yet that very pride made her feel more interest in the child. How she wished that Egbert had been with her ; then, without any fault on her part, *he* would have seen Nanny, and if he should become interested, Edwin would be unable to help it. But, since Mrs. Tavish worked for the Bluns, and Egbert meant to continue his visits to the Bluns, might he not meet Nanny some time ? That thought comforted her, and she made up her mind not to tell Edwin that she had met Nanny, nor, that Nanny's mother worked for Mrs. Blun. She also resolved to send to Mrs. Tavish in a letter the bill Nanny had refused.

CHAPTER XXII.

NANNY was surprised when she came out with the empty basket to find Lizzie waiting for her.

"I thought maybe, you'd have other clothes to take back, and I could help you carry them," Lizzie said half in apology.

"How kind you are, Lizzie," and that was all Nanny could say for she was crying.

Lizzie took the basket on her own arm and put her other arm around Nanny's shoulders, but she did not speak; she did not know what to say: but the tenderness of the action went to Nanny's soul as perhaps no words would have done. She was crying from the disappointment of not having received any money to bring to her mother, Mrs. Blun having sent word by Jane that she had no time to attend to the bill then; Mrs. Tavish must wait till the following week.

Nanny, thinking how distressed her mother would be at her return without any money, began to regret that she had not taken Miss Ingoldsby's bill.

"I needn't have been so proud," she said to herself, "but it seemed just like being a beggar the way she held it out to me," and then she went on crying quietly, till Lizzie in her pity said softly:

"Can't I do something to make you feel better, Nanny?"

"It's them," burst from Nanny, "the Bluns: Mrs. Blun told the girl to tell me she couldn't pay

the bill till next week—and she's rich—I hate those rich people—don't you?"

But the very next moment she was half frightened and sorry for having spoken so.

"I don't mean that, Lizzie; I don't hate them, but I think they're just as mean as dirt," kicking the dirt at her feet to give force to what she said.

"They're as mean as mud," said Lizzie.

Nanny was silent for a moment, she felt too miserable to care to speak, and she did not notice that Lizzie was going out of her way till they got within a block of Nanny's home. Then, she said with a start:

"I am so sorry; I didn't think, and I've let you carry the basket the whole way. How mean I've been and how can I thank you?"

"You haven't been mean at all; I was glad to carry the basket for you, you seemed so sad," said Lizzie generously, "but I must run home, now, for my uncle may want me."

And giving up the basket she turned and ran down the street. One cause of her going so fast was to get away from Nanny's thanks, but another reason was she had thought of a plan to help Nanny's mother, and she wanted to tell it to her uncle.

When she had done so, showing in the telling more of her generous heart than even he had seen before, he felt, "that of such indeed were the kingdom of Heaven."

Her plan was to give to Mrs. Tavish the money that the lessons in drawing would cost, and her only thought was how to give it, so that Nanny and her mother should not know who gave it; then their feelings would not be hurt.

Dad took out his pocket book; fortunately his wife was out on one of her afternoon excursions, so she need know nothing of this little occurrence.

"Maybe," he said, "you won't have to do without the drawing lessons," taking a five dollar gold piece

from his pocket book, "anyway you can go to-morrow, Lizzie, and find out what they'll charge for the lessons ; and you can run with this now, to that poor little girl."

"Oh, I couldn't do that, Dad ; that would be treating her like a beggar, and maybe she won't take it if she knows who is giving it."

"Well, what will you do, then ?" said Dad puzzled.

"I'll tell you," said Lizzie, who had been thinking very hard.

"I'll ask Oleander Thimig to take it. Nanny Tavish never saw him, and he never saw her. I'll tell him to say that a friend sent it, and that he can't answer any questions."

Mr. Morrell laughed.

"He is so stupid, Lizzie ; like as not he'll say what you don't want him to."

"No, he won't. I'll make him study what he's to say, and he'll be glad to do something for me. He told me so the other day."

"Very well ; then you'd better see him now, for there's no telling when Maria 'll be back, and she'll want to know what you are going out again for."

Thimig was alone in the shop trimming a child's coffin when Lizzie got there.

"Come in, Lizzie," he said, stopping his work, and looking as delighted as though she had brought him some good news.

Lizzie stepped within.

"You aint come 'bout anybody that's dead, are you ?" he asked, and then as if he felt that he should not have said that, he added quickly :

"You see, you don't come into the shop to play anymore ; why, there usen't to be a coffin here as didn't know you, Lizzie ; you used to get into all of 'em in turn, but now, they stands up stiff and straight against the wall with nobody to notice 'em, and just a waitin' for the stiffs that's to go into 'em. And

trade aint good this summer ; last summer we used to have five cases a day sometimes, but this summer it's very disappointing—only a child this whole day," and the family said they could saltpetre its face and save the cost of ice."

Lizzie waiting for a chance to speak lost her patience.

"I didn't come in here to talk about coffins, or dead people," she said, "I came in to ask you to do something for me, Oleander."

"What is it Lizzie ? I'll do anything for you that this ere pair of hands can do."

"It isn't your hands this time," she said laughing, "it's your feet. I want you to take this somewhere," holding up a tiny paper package, "and you are not to say a thing only what I tell you to say."

Oleander looked grave. When it was a question of delivering important messages he knew himself he was not much to be trusted ; everybody about him knew that, and few and far between were the messages he was ever asked to deliver. But he would do his very best for Lizzie, and so he told her, adding, that he could not go for a half hour, till Mr. Brush came.

"That will do," said Lizzie, then having told him where Nanny lived, she went on :

"You ask for Mrs. Tavish, Oleander, and you say to her that a friend of hers sent you with this little package. It's money ; it's a five dollar gold piece," putting the parcel into his hand, "and if she asks who the friend is, or who gave it to you, you say that you can't answer any questions. Now, that's easy ; aint it, Oleander ?"

Oleander placing the parcel in an inside pocket, nodded. But Lizzie was not satisfied with that.

"Tell me what you are going to say," she demanded.

He seated himself on one of the coffin-stools the better to be able to bring his whole mind to the sub-

ject ; then, spreading his big red hands on his knees, and looking very solemnly into her face, he began :

“ I’ll give this ere parcel to the woman wot you calls Mrs. Tavish, and I’ll tell that Tavish woman a friend of her’n sent it, and that it’s agin the law for me to answer any questions whatsoever—that’s straight, aint it ? ”

“ Yes ; I guess that’s straight enough,” said Lizzie laughing, “ and to-morrow, sometime, I’ll run in and hear how you got along. And I’m very much obliged, Oleander ; sometime perhaps, I can do something for you.”

With the last word she darted from the shop leaving Thimig with his mouth open about to speak. He was so astonished at her sudden departure that his mouth remained open for a moment ; then, as he rose slowly from the stool, and went as slowly back to his work, he said to himself :

“ She’s as oncertain as a streak o’ lightnin’, dartin’ down on you when you’re no ways expectin’ her, and flyin’ off when you’re settled down to the feelin’ that you have her. But that’s the way girls is, generally, girls as has them flamin’ eyes wot she’s got.”

CHAPTER XXIII.

MRS. TAVISH was both ill and in pain ; the sore on her back was a large abscess, and she had borne with it trying to work and saying little about the pain till she could not help herself. Not being able to lie down she was seated in the middle of the room.

Nanny had tried to make the hard wooden chair more comfortable by placing a pillow on it, but even then, Mrs. Tavish had to stoop forward all the time, and the pain often made her groan.

When Nanny returned and told her mother with tears and sobs all that had happened, Mrs. Tavish had so many other feelings to struggle against, she almost forgot the pain of her back.

To have the payment of her little bill put off till the following week with only ten cents in the house, and nowhere else to look for money, seemed cruel, but with all that she had a sort of thankfulness that Nanny had not taken Miss Ingoldsby's money. Money from the Ingoldsbys when she earned it was well enough, but money from them in any other way made her cheeks burn.

"But I wish I had taken it," said Nanny, "it would have made up for Mrs. Blun's not paying."

"Don't worry about it now, darling."

"But what *will* you do, mamma? You said we had only ten cents."

"Well, we shan't starve, dear," trying to smile cheerfully, "the grocer will trust us till I'm able to

work again, and God will help us, and I hope He will reward that kind little Lizzie Morrell." Not a word did she say against Mrs. Blun at which Nanny wondered, and that gentle forbearance on the part of Mrs. Tavish was not without its influence on the child's own character.

The darts of violent pain were making themselves felt again, and Nanny, hearing her mother's half suppressed groan, started up, saying :

"Oh, mamma ; I can't see you suffer so ; I'm going to call some one in the house to help me do something for you."

Her mother caught her. "Don't dear ; they all have so much to do for their own families, but take the ten cents and get a half pound of flax seed, and I'll tell you how to make a poultice for me."

The hope of being able to relieve her mother's pain made Nanny do her errand very quickly, but when, under her mother's direction she had the poultice ready she could hardly bring herself to put it on, for the abscess looked so red and sore. More than once Nanny shuddered and turned her head aside but she did not let her mother know how she felt, and at length she put it on so gently and so well, Mrs. Tavish said she felt better already, and that Nanny was one of the dearest little nurses in the world.

An hour after they were both somewhat startled by a very loud knock at the door. Nanny opened it. A large, awkward looking boy stood there, holding a parcel in his hand ; the parcel had grown so much larger by having the whole of two large newspapers wrapped round it to keep it more safely, that Lizzie never would have known it as the tiny package she had made.

The boy took off his cap showing a mass of stiff, coarse, light hair, and his big, stupid looking eyes went from Nanny to the bowed figure in the chair, and then to everything in the room, but he did not speak. Nanny, thinking he was looking for some-

body else in the house, and becoming impatient at being kept from her mother, said shortly .

“What do you want?”

Thimig nodded his head gravely, and said :

“I’m a coming to it.”

Nanny did not know what to make of such an answer, and had she been alone she might have been frightened. Her mother called from her chair :

“What is it?”

“It’s a message wot has to be given to a woman wot bears the name of Tavish, and no questions answered,” replied Thimig, and then he stepped wholly within the room.

“That’s my mother’s name,” said Nanny in some doubt as to the safety of her mother and herself if he got any further. But Thimig felt he would not be obeying orders if he said any more to the child, so he went and stood by Mrs. Tavish’s chair; then, not knowing quite what to say, he said nothing.

Mrs. Tavish wondering very much, said :

“I am Mrs. Tavish, what is it you want with me?”

“You’re to get this,” holding out a parcel, “a friend o’ your’n sent it, and no questions answered.

“That’s strange,” said Mrs. Tavish, “I don’t know what friend would send me anything. Open it, Nanny.”

“You needn’t open it,” said Thimig, “it’s money, least she said it was money—a five dollar gold piece.”

“A five dollar gold piece in that big package,” said Mrs. Tavish, “and sent by a lady—you say *she* said it was money.”

“Oh, Lor!” said Thimig, feeling that he had told something without any questions being asked, and to atone for his blunder, he went on.

“It was a party wot said that, a party wot said no questions answered, and there aint no law in this ere land as’ll make me answer questions.”

Nanny had begun to open the package, taking off so much newspaper that she said :

“Oh, mamma ! it doesn't seem like anything but paper.”

Thimig felt as if that were a charge against him, and he hastened to say :

“Them ere newspapers was tied by me, cause you see, when the party left wot give me the parcel and no questions answered, I was afraid it might drop out of my pocket. You just go deeper, little 'un and you'll find there's somethin' as isn't paper wot that party left.”

And then, lest he should make another blunder, he bolted from the room : they could hear him running through the hall.

“What a funny boy,” said Nanny, too much interested in getting to the contents of the package, to look after him. At length she found the gold piece.

“Oh, mamma !” she said joyfully, “it *is* money. You said God would help us.”

“And so He has, dear,” her mother answered. She did not say what she thought, that it was Miss Ingoldsby who had sent the money. And though it was most timely help, Mrs. Tavish hardly knew whether to be glad or not ; there might be future sadness to herself from that gift of the Ingoldsbys.

It never came into Nanny's mind that Miss Ingoldsby had sent the money, and she tired herself trying to think who was the giver.

Thimig on his homeward way felt very much troubled lest Lizzie should find out how he in giving her message had said “*she*.” In that case, Lizzie would never care for him again, and now, just as they had become good friends again, it was too bad.

“What did I say that for?” he said to himself, “there wasn't no reason why I should have gone and put a *she* in it ; there aint no luck in *shes* ; there always gettin' fellows in trouble,” and just then, having his big eyes turned on the ground in-

stead of in front of him, he struck violently against one of the "she's."

And the "she" was Mrs. Morrell, and her arms were full of packages ; for she had been shopping. She had seen Thimig when he was a whole block distant and she went toward him on purpose because it pleased her to see his fear of her. But she was not at all prepared for the shock that sent them both violently in opposite directions. Thimig being a much smaller body went almost spinning to the gutter, while Mrs. Morrell brought up breathless against the steps of a house. But her breathlessness was nothing to his terror when he picked himself up and saw whom he had knocked against.

"Oh, Mrs. Morrell !" he stuttered, "I didn't know as it was you—I—"

But she had got back her breath, and she did not let him finish.

"Didn't know it was me you coffin making rascal. Didn't know it was me, and I in front of your two eyes ; now, you know, you undertaking vagabond, that you're telling a lie."

Passers by hearing her loud voice stopped to listen, and a little street chap who had seen and enjoyed all that had taken place scrambled after her parcels.

"Say, Missus," he said, coming up to her with them, "didn't you drop these ere things?"

Without answering him she put out her big hands to take them.

"Oh, no ; yer don't," he said drawing back, and making fancy steps with his dirty bare feet, "a feller don't pick up things for nothin' this hot weather. You just gimme somethin'."

Looking at his size—he did not seem tall enough to reach to Lizzie's shoulder—his boldness took Mrs. Morrell's angry attention from Thimig.

"You ondacious little cur," she said, making a dive for him, "give me them things this minute."

But the boy was beyond her reach, and making more fancy steps, after which he flung his parcels—there were five of them—all over the sidewalk, and then putting his thumbs into the sides of his ragged jacket, he began to whistle one of the popular street tunes.

That had given Thimig time to recover somewhat from his fright, and when he saw the parcels a second time scattered on the ground, he went meekly and picked them up. The street chap seeing that, stopped whistling and shouted :

“Gether ’em in Shooks ! but don’t give ’em to the old gal—make her fork out. She’s got the jinks.”

Mrs. Morrell felt as if never had she been so angry as she was with that dirty, ragged little impudent boy. What Thimig had done was nothing in comparison to the impertinence of this chap, and seeing the amusement it gave to the people who had stopped to look on, and feeling that it would be useless for her to try to catch the little wretch, she screamed to Thimig who was looking round to make sure that he had recovered all the bundles :

“Ketch him, Orlander ! ketch him and hold him till I get him.”

Thimig was overjoyed at being called on to do a service for Mrs. Morrell, and a service that seemed so easy, for the boy was such a small boy. So he dropped the bundles, and rushed for the street chap.

That daring mite instead of running away actually put himself into fighting position, shouting :

“Come on, Shooks ! don’t be afeerd ; I’ll let yer have it easy.”

The pluck of the little fellow actually squaring against a boy three times his size, and surely more than twice his age, made the bystanders roar with laughter, and whether it was their mirth, or the boldness of the imp that did it, Thimig stopped short as if he were afraid.

"Oh, come on, Shooks! I aint going to hurt yer much," the imp said, and the tone of his voice was so amusing the bystanders roared with laughter again, and some of them cheered.

Mrs. Morrell had picked up her bundles, and seeing how Thimig hesitated, she said:

"The lout! what is he standing there for? I'll have to ketch the rascal myself, and when I do, I'll wring his neck."

The imp saw her coming, and with a shrill whoop he darted to a lamp post, climbed it as if he were a monkey, and clinging to the top grinned down at the crowd.

Mrs. Morrell shook her fist at him, then she turned and took Thimig by the collar.

"Go home, you coward."

Thimig, turning white with fear at this unexpected attack, whimpered:

"I'm a goin', Mrs. Morrell, I'm a goin' home, and I was a goin' peaceable when you knocked against me."

"I knocked against you? wasn't it you, you buryin' wretch, that knocked the breath out of me?"

"Yes, yes, Mrs. Morrell; it wos anything you're a mind to say, only let go of me," and as she still held him to the increased amusement of the spectators, he went on:

"When I knocked against you, Mrs. Morrell, I didn't see you, cause I wos a worried 'bout what I said when I went on that errand wot Lizzie come into the coffin shop for."

Mrs. Morrell dropped Thimig, and almost dropped her parcels again.

"*My* Lizzie? is it *my* Lizzie you're talking about?"

"Oh, Lor! I've done it now, sure," said Thimig, in despair.

Mrs. Morrell was convinced that something had been concealed from her; in order to find it out, it

might be well to abate some of her anger with Thimig, so she said, in a suspiciously mild voice :

“Carry them parcels home for me, Orlander.”

She put the packages into his arms, and then she turned on the crowd.

“What are you starin’ at me for, as if I was a rhinoceros, or an elephant? Go about your business, every one of you,” making a sort of charge before which the people fell back laughing heartily, but only to return and follow her, when with Thimig she went on her way again.

“Now, Orlander,” she said, as she made sure he had all the bundles ; “I want you to tell me what my Lizzie’s been doin’ ; what errand she come into the coffin shop about ?”

But Thimig only said .

“Oh, Lor ! maybe I’ve done it, and maybe I haven’t. Maybe it’s worse than no questions answered, an’ maybe its a trap wot means all questions answered. Oh, Lor ! oh Lor !”

“Now look here, Orlander,” said Mrs. Morrell, her tone not quite so mild this time, “you, and my Lizzie’s been a transactin’ of some business unbeknownst to me, and I’m goin’ to get to the bottom of it if I have to give you another rammin’ into one of the coffins. So, out with it ; do you hear ?”

Such a threat, remembering how she once had put his head into a coffin, frightened Thimig so that his teeth chattered. Still, he did dot want to reveal Lizzie’s secret, and with some thought in his stupid mind of being able to keep it back if he answered in a roundabout way, he said :

“I’ll tell you, Mrs. Morrell, only gim me time. It wos just this way ; nigh’ bout three o’clock this afternoon when I wos all alone by meself in the shop a trimmin’ of a coffin for Mrs. Tappan’s baby wot died this mornin’, an’ I wos a thinkin’ in me own mind, an a wonderin’ Mrs. Morrell, if the lace border wouldn’t look better than the satin round the baby’s face, an’

a reck'nin' how many screws that ere little lid 'd take."

But Mrs. Morrell could bear no more. "Orlander," she said with a solemn sternness that frightened him still more, "you're a talkin' and you aint sayin' any thing. What did my Lizzie want with you?"

"I'm a comin' to the point, Mrs. Morrell; I'm a comin' to it if you'll only gim me time. Your Lizzie, she come into the shop, that is she come to the shop door, for she don't come into the shop no more like she used to, an' she wos a standin' on the threshold before I knowed she was there, and when I ketched her flamin' eyes on me, I just thought——"

But what he thought he did not tell, for Mrs. Morrell having lost all patience gave him a stinging slap on the ear, and as she seemed about to give him nother, he lifted his arms full as they were of the parcels, and begged:

"Don't yer box me again, good Mrs. Morrell; now don't yer."

"Come to the point, then, you coffin screwing fool," and she caught him by the ear to the great delight of those who still followed her, being careful however to keep at a respectful distance.

"I will, Mrs. Morrell; o-o-oh, I will," as she tweaked his ear painfully, and then he blubbered out what had passed between himself and Lizzie. He was blubbering as much because of having told Lizzie's secret as he was at the pain Mrs. Morrell gave him. Mrs. Morrell let go his ear, and was silent for a moment; but she was angrily thinking how dared Bartholomew give money to Lizzie to take to other people, and then to keep it secret from her: but she soon would find out all about it.

"Orlander," she said shortly, "you take me to where Mrs. Tavish lives."

"Oh, Lor!" said Thimig, but he turned about and led the way to the house he had so lately left. He did not know but that she might make him go in,

and "if she does," he said to himself, "no questions answered won't be no use ; it'll be all questions answered, I'm a thinkin' !"

But Mrs. Morrell was satisfied to have him guide her to the door of Mrs. Tavish's room ; there she took her packages from him, and told him to go home.

Nanny had just bared her mother's back to see what good the poultice had done. and she called without moving from her place :

"Come in."

Mrs. Morrell entered, and she was recognized at once by both mother and daughter. Nanny saying :

"It's Lizzie Morrell's aunt."

And Lizzie Morrell's aunt, to her own surprise, saw in Nanny the little girl who had answered all the questions on examination day, and in Mrs. Tavish, the woman who had proudly whispered that she was the mother of the bright little girl. But seeing the poor looking room, the suffering woman, the child trying to act as nurse, not only softened Mrs. Morrell's anger but touched her pity

"Yes ; I'm Lizzie Morrell's aunt," she said, "and now that I'm here, and see the way you are, if you don't mind I'll just tend a bit to that sore on your back, Mrs. Tavish. I know all about such things for I've had to poultice, and to plaster, and to bandage my own husband a good many times."

And without waiting to be told that she could do so, she put down her parcels, threw off her shawl, rolled up her sleeves, looked at the abscess and said it would break in a day or two if it were helped by the right kind of poultices ; then she sent Nanny to the drug store for the things she needed for the poultices, giving her money out of her own pocket-book, and saying so that Mrs. Tavish's feelings would not be hurt :

"You can just look upon it as borrowed, if you like."

And while Nanny was out, Mrs. Morrell attended to the sore so well that Mrs. Tavish's pain was greatly lessened.

"I don't know how to thank you," Mrs. Tavish said smiling, and at the same time feeling sorry for the thoughts she used to have about Mrs. Morrell.

"You have given me relief already. I felt so thankful when Nanny told me of Lizzie's kindness to her this afternoon, but I'm sure I didn't think she was going to tell *you* about us, and that you would be so good as to come here.

Mrs. Morrell said nothing to that ; she deemed it as well to let Mrs. Tavish think Lizzie had told her, but she did want to find out what kindness Lizzie had done to Nanny, and after a little she managed so, that Mrs. Tavish told all about it. She even told how badly Nanny had felt at not being paid by Mrs. Blun.

"But," she went on, "the ways of God are strange ; to think that a couple of hours after a boy should come here with a five dollar gold piece, from a friend, he said, but he told without meaning to do so, how the friend was a lady. It seemed as if some good angel sent it, for I was depending entirely on Mrs. Blun's money, and that five dollars will help me till next week when I shall be able to work again."

"You won't be able to work, next week, Mrs. Tavish," said Mrs. Morrell with a sort of rough kindness, "you won't be able to do anything for two weeks yet. I know what them sores are—Bartholomew Mortimer, that's my husband, had one, and I know the time it took *him* to get well."

"Oh, dear !" said Mrs. Tavish in dismay, "two weeks ! what will become of Nanny and me ? and I can't expect Mrs. Blun to keep her work for me, and if somebody else does it, maybe she won't want to give it to me again."

"Don't fret about that, Mrs. Tavish ; just tell me

where Mrs. Blun lives, and I'll get somebody to do her washing for you till you're well enough yourself, to do it again ; and now, I'm going to ask you to do me a favor."

"To do you a favor after your kindness to me, Mrs. Morrell ? Can you doubt that I would be glad to do anything I could ?"

"Well, it's just this ; not to say a word about me to Lizzie ; of course, she'll be running in to see you, and don't say I was here. Don't say a word about me, neither you, nor your little girl."

"Surely, Mrs. Morrell ; but that's not much of a favor."

Just then Nanny returned, Mrs. Morrell made the poultice and put it on, and after that she insisted on remaining to prepare supper for both mother and daughter, and finding in the closet nothing more than bread and tea, she went out herself, taking Mrs. Tavish's market basket.

Mrs. Tavish's cheeks got red at needing so much assistance ; she never had been quite so poor before, but,

"Beggars can't be choosers," she said to herself, and then as she thought of the honest kindness of Mrs. Morrell, she was vexed with herself for being so proud.

Mrs. Morrell came back with her basket well filled, and in a very little while she had some nice tea made, and a juicy steak broiled for both mother and daughter. Mrs. Tavish could take only the tea, but it made her heart glad to see poor little hungry Nanny eat with great relish.

While Nanny was eating, Mrs. Morrell said :

"I think now, you'll get along pretty well for the night, Mrs. Tavish ; your little girl understands what to do about the poultices, and I'll come again in the morning."

But when she had put on her bonnet and shawl, and had taken up her parcels, she looked about her

to make sure she had done everything that needed to be done before she should go, and while she stood thus, Nanny felt as if *she* ought to do something to make up for her old thoughts of Mrs. Morrell. At once she jumped from her seat, and flung her arms round Mrs. Morrell's neck :

"I love you," she said.

That was all, and the next minute she was back in her seat, but the action had thrilled the woman to the heart.

Mrs. Morrell knew nothing of the caresses of a child—Lizzie never even kissed her.

"I'll be in the first thing in the morning," she said again softly, and then without another word she went out closing the door gently behind her.

Mother and child looked at each other ; they both had the same thought. The child spoke first :

"I feel as if I had been so wicked, mamma · but I never thought Mrs. Morrell was like this."

The mother said, speaking out of the fullness of her own gratitude :

"Let it be a lesson to us, Nanny, never to judge people hastily again."

"I wish Lizzie would like her aunt better," said Nanny. "Don't you think, mamma, if Lizzie knew how kind her aunt really is, she would like her?"

"Yes, dear ; and perhaps it will come about in time. Knowing Lizzie so well, maybe you will be able to help it."

"If I could only tell her what Mrs. Morrell has done for us."

"But you must not tell a word of that, dear. I promised that you would not."

Nanny was silent for a moment, then all at once, she burst out passionately :

"Mamma ; I hate rich people."

"Yes, I do," she went on, seeing her mother's surprised, and somewhat reproving look. "Mrs. Blun is rich, and she wouldn't even be kind enough to take

the time to pay you. Miss Ingoldsby's rich and she didn't care how she hurt my feelings, Helen Blun's rich, and look at the way she acts. Lizzie Morrell is not rich, and Mrs. Morrell is not rich, but just think how kind they are. Yes, I *do* hate rich people."

Mrs. Tavish sighed, and yet way down in her heart she was glad that Nanny no longer cared for Miss Ingoldsby ; but she said to the child :

"Have we not just been saying that we must not judge people hastily, and perhaps, if we could look into the hearts of those persons you named we should see many things to make us change our thoughts of them. Oh, Nanny ! Are you going to grow up like this, giving way to your temper and hating people because they have hurt your feelings a little ?"

The tender sadness in her voice and the look of trouble in her face already white and drawn from pain, made Nanny penitent at once ; her temper went as quickly as it had come and she threw herself at her mother's feet sobbing :

"I won't hate them any more then, but, oh, it is so hard not to."

CHAPTER XXV.

MRS. MORRELL on her way home did not feel at all like her old self. The happiness that comes from having made other people happy, filled her heart, and Nanny's arms seemed to be about her still, causing her to thrill with the feeling of motherhood. She could not be angry with anybody just then, and she wished she could always be in that amiable temper; maybe if she were, she would get along better with Lizzie, and then Bartholomew would love her more, and they would all be happier. But she made up her mind she was not going to let either her husband or Lizzie know the kind act she had done; if they could be so secret about their good works, she could be secret about her's also, and she meant to stop in the coffin shop on her way, and tell Thimig not to say anything about her.

Thimig was sitting on a stool in the middle of the shop thinking in a very forlorn way of all that had happened that afternoon. He looked up at the big figure darkening the doorway, and when he saw it was Mrs. Morrell, he jumped from his seat and hid behind a pile of coffins.

"Orlander!" she called, and the tone of her voice was so different from what he expected, he thrust his head out from his hiding place.

"I don't want to do you no harm," she went on, "I only want to tell you that you musn't let Lizzie know I went to Mrs. Tavish's, or that you've seen me at all."

Thimig thrust his shoulders in sight.

"I don't want her, nor Mr. Morrell to know anything about what I've been doing for the Tavishes," she still went on, "for they're poor people, Orlander, very poor people, and it was very good of Lizzie to bring you that money for them."

Half of Thimig's body was in sight.

"My Lizzie's a good girl if I do say it, as is her aunt by marriage; she's a very feeling girl, and she brings it from the Morrells, not speaking of course, of the training she's got from me."

Thimig came wholly into view.

"There are people in this world as don't appreciate goodness when they see it, but I'm not one of them. When I see goodness I know it, if it's only in a dog, and when I went to Mrs. Tavish's, and saw the good my Lizzie had been doing, by sending you with that money, Orlander, I was proud of my Lizzie."

Thimig could hardly believe that he heard aright; Mrs. Morrell speaking so well of Lizzie, and in his own delight that it was so, he could only think of something Mr. Brush always said when he wanted to show how pleased he was with anybody. And to show his pleasure, Thimig said very solemnly:

"Mrs. Morrell, you're a brick."

She nodded, not that she meant the nod to be taken as a sign that she was a brick, but to show that what she had said was quite true; and then she went on:

"I'll depend on you, Orlander, to keep all this in your own bosom; you're not to tell one word of it to Lizzie, nor to anybody else. Do you promise me, Orlander?"

Thimig crossed his hands on his breast and said:

"It's there, Mrs. Morrell; it's there in the inside part of my bosom, and it's stuck so fast forty-four wild horses couldn't draw it out."

She nodded again, this time to show she believed

him, and that she was satisfied ; and then she went away.

"I was getting anxious about you, Maria," said her husband, when she came in panting from coming up the stairs. He spoke so tenderly, it seemed to bring back all she had felt on leaving Mrs. Tavish, and she put down her parcels and went to him.

"Bartholomew, it's good of you to be anxious about me, and it's not good of me that I aint more anxious about you, and maybe you thought it was neglectful of me to be out so long from you, but I was buyin' some odds and ends and the time went."

"Oh, it wasn't that I minded your being out," he said, wondering at her gentle, affectionate manner, "but that I was afraid when you were so much longer than you generally are, something might have happened to you, dear," and he lifted his face to her that she might kiss him."

"Lizzie wondered too," he went on, "and she's had the supper ready this good while. She went into the kitchen just before you came to make sure your tea would be hot, for I know the comfort you take in a good, strong, hot cup of tea, Maria."

His tenderness went to her heart. She kissed him again, saying :

"It's too good you are to me, Bartholomew," and then she went to the kitchen.

Lizzie had prepared the supper very nicely, and so as to have her aunt's tea particularly good, she had made a fresh pot as soon as she heard Mrs. Morrell's voice in the sitting room ; and Mrs. Morrell, directly that she tasted the tea, praised it to Lizzie's utter astonishment. But Lizzie was still feeling sore at what her aunt had said that day about Lizzie's visits to the window of the picture gallery, and thinking that her aunt would continue to say something disagreeable whenever she saw her going out, Lizzie was not won much by her aunt's kind manner now.

The next morning when Lizzie awoke without be-

ing called by her aunt as usual, and found when she went into the kitchen, it was eight o'clock, she was again surprised. Her breakfast was ready, the coffee as nice and hot as she had Mrs. Morrell's tea the evening before, but Mrs. Morrell was nowhere to be seen. Since vacation had begun, Lizzie had helped to prepare the breakfast, and she ran into her uncle to know what it meant. Her uncle was up, walking about the room with his cane, and looking very happy.

"What is the matter, Dad?" she asked, almost out of breath. "Has anything happened?"

He shook his head.

"I don't know; Maria aint like herself; she's been more like a saint this morning. She said she wanted to go out early and that she wouldn't call you, but just left your breakfast all ready for you; that it was good for you to have a long sleep once in a while; then she gave me my breakfast. I always said Maria was a good woman, but this goodness doesn't seem natural; she wasn't like herself at all," and he really looked troubled for an instant. while Lizzie looked puzzled.

Lizzie however, did not think that Mrs. Morrell would continue to be so good, but she would not say that to her uncle. She just kissed him, made sure he wanted nothing and went back to eat her breakfast. Then she did her morning housework.

It was almost noon when Mrs. Morrell returned, and she was just as gentle as she had been the evening before. She did not say a word even when Lizzie prepared to go out; but for all that the child did not trust her, and she said to herself as she went down the stairs carrying carefully wrapped from sight the copy she had made of the engraving:

"It seems like as if she was just thinking to do something. I wonder what it is."

Then she skipped on to the undertaker's shop to find out how Thimig had got along.

Thimig saw her coming and he crossed his hands on his breast ; that was to help him keep his promise to Mrs. Morrell.

Mr. Brush was also in the shop and though he was used to the boy's strange ways, and amusing stupidity, he wondered what in the world made him cross his arms like that.

Lizzie went only to the door-way, and giving a friendly nod to Mr. Brush, she said quickly to Thimig :

“ Did you do that ? ”

He crossed his arms more tightly on his breast, and said in a very solemn way :

“ I done it, Lizzie, ”

“ What did they say ? who did you see ? who did you give it to ? ” she asked more quickly than before.

“ I went to that ere house wot you told me, Lizzie, with my mind made up on the point of no questions answered, and I seen the woman wot you told me to see, and I made that point plain to her, and I held out that ere parcel wot you give me, and wot I wrapped in two newspapers so it wouldn't be lost to that woman, but she didn't take it. ”

“ Didn't take it, ” said Lizzie, her face clouding with disappointment.

“ You wos too quick ; I was goin' to say didn't take it herself cause I guess she was too much doubled up in the chair to take it ; but a little 'un like yourself took it, and she was a unwrappin' of it when I come away. ”

“ And didn't they know what was in it till after you came away ? ” she asked, her face brightening.

“ I won't say as to that, Lizzie, ” he said.

Lizzie became impatient and she forgot Mr. Brush was listening—he was shaking with silent laughter at Thimig.

“ Tell me one thing, Oleander, ” she said, half

angrily ; did you tell them who sent you with that parcel ?”

“No, I didn’t Lizzie ; I stuck to the point of no questions answered.”

She seemed more satisfied, but not entirely, for after a moment’s pause, she asked again :

“You haven’t told anybody, Oleander, have you ?”

That question put the poor boy into a dreadful plight. Stupid as he was he was strictly conscientious. But how was he to keep his promise to Mrs. Morrell, and how was he to keep Lizzie from knowing that he had betrayed her secret without telling an “out and out” lie. He raised his crossed hands to his shoulders catching the latter very tightly, as if there were something in the pressure to help him, and then he began :

“There ere circumstances, Lizzie, in a feller’s life when it aint no good to reckon on what’ll happen to him, when he’s a goin’ along, with his head down, and his hands a swinging, and his feet steady, and he aint a thinking no harm of nobody, and he’s a wondering, maybe, Lizzie, ’bout——” but not being able to say what it was he might be wondering about, he repeated :

“And when as I say, he aint a thinking no harm of nobody, but he’s a wondering, maybe, Lizzie——”

He was cut short by a roar of laughter from Mr. Brush who could restrain his mirth no longer, and then Lizzie’s look of puzzled astonishment gave way, and she laughed also.

“I don’t believe you know what you’re talking about, Oleander,” she said, “and I can’t wait any longer to find out.”

She turned away as she spoke, and in another moment she had gone from the shop.

Thimig dropped his hands slowly to his sides and looked after her ; then he looked at Mr. Brush who was still laughing.

"She thinks I'm a ejeet,"—he meant idiot—he said mournfully.

"I shouldn't wonder," said Mr. Brush.

"But I aint," said Thimig more mournfully still, "it's circumstances wot's agen me ; it's no questions answered ; wot's done it."

And then he went to a corner of the shop and sat in sullen silence till Mr. Brush called him to do some work.

CHAPTER XXVI.

LIZZIE went directly from the undertaker's shop to see Nanny Tavish ; she went with some fear lest her visit might hurt Nanny's sensitiveness in some way, but so far from that being the case, the visit seemed to give Nanny a great deal of pleasure, and she drew the little girl with much delight to her mother, and Mrs. Tavish shook hands with her warmly and thanked her for coming.

Then Nanny told how much better her mother was, the abscess having broken that morning, and how a queer looking boy had brought them a five dollar gold piece the afternoon before, which was sent by some friend, and Lizzie laughed at Nanny's account of Thimig till the tears came in her eyes.

When she rose to go, Mrs. Tavish kissed her and told her again how kind it was for her to come, at which Lizzie blushed and showed so much haste to get away from both thanks and praise that Mrs. Tavish was better pleased with her than ever.

Nanny went with Lizzie to the street door, giving her a second hug before she let her go, and longing as she stood with her arms about her to tell her of Mrs. Morrell's kindness, as it was, she could not help saying :

"I feel as if I loved everybody in the world, to-day, Lizzie for after all, everybody in the world has something that we would love if we only knew way down in their hearts. Don't you think so, Lizzie?"

Lizzie nodded carelessly, not dreaming of the hidden motive of Nanny's speech ; nor did she think of

the speech again as she skipped along to the picture gallery, for Lizzie herself felt very happy ; happy enough to forgive poor stupid Thimig for having told that the friend was "she."

The cause of her happiness was that she was going to find out what the lessons in drawing would cost, and her uncle advised her to take the copy she had made of the engraving to the teacher.

"Kaufmann's Art Rooms." The big red sign had a formidable look, and for the first time Lizzie wished she had some one with her ; but she went up the flight of stairs without stopping. Then she thought it would be good manners to knock, but nobody answered though she could hear the soft hum of voices within, and at length she turned the knob and entered.

It seemed to be a room full of statues, and many ladies and gentlemen were there, some walking about, and others standing before the images and talking in a low tone. Nobody noticed the bewildered little girl till an elderly gentleman coming from an inner room and seeing her, asked kindly :

"What do you want, Sissy?"

"Mr. Bromley," she replied, feeling that she need not say anything more till she was assured she was speaking to that gentleman.

"He is in the next room ; come with me."

She followed the elderly gentleman, finding the next room to be very large and filled with paintings and engravings ; they seemed to cover every part of the walls, and there were so many pictures placed on easels that her guide had to take a sort of winding path in leading her through the apartment.

Lizzie for wonder and awe, was hardly able to breathe as she followed him ; the very air seemed to be full of something that made her feel as if she had been wickedly bold in daring to come into this charmed place. How should she ever have courage to show her poor little sketch in the midst of this

wonder land of beauty and genius? what would the great and noble Mr. Bromley—she thought he must be both great and noble since he was to be found amid all these masterpieces—think of her boldness, a poor little ignorant girl wanting to take *such* lessons?

How she wished she had not come, but it was too late for her guide led her up to two gentlemen who were talking in front of a painting that stood on an easel; the painting was that of the child's head from the crayon drawing of which she had made her poor little copy.

“Bromley, here's some one for you,” said the elderly gentleman, beginning at once to take a winding path back, and the two gentlemen turned to Lizzie. One of the gentlemen did more the moment he saw her; he took a step forward, saying:

“My little unknown girl of Margaret Anthon's fruit stand.”

Then Lizzie saw that he was the handsome gentleman who had won her admiration on that never-to-be-forgotten Saturday morning, and that fact but added to her embarrassment. What would *he* think of her when he should hear what she had come for. She hugged her little drawing more tightly, making up her mind it should never be taken out of its wrapper.

Mr. Nevin saw her blushing and he said to his companion, a small slight young man with a large head, a great deal of black, curling hair, and big dark eyes.

“This little girl has business with you, Bromley; I shall go to another part of the room.” He went over to a corner, turned his back, and seemed to be looking very closely at a picture.

Mr. Bromley was not used to doing business with children, and he smiled when he heard what she wanted.

“Have you ever taken any lessons in drawing?”

he asked more as a vent for his amusement at this ridiculous child coming to ask him, the great Bromley, what he charged for his lessons, than to get an answer.

“Yes; I took lessons in school.”

“A public school?” the tone was one of lofty contempt.

“Yes;” said Lizzie who was now almost unable to speak.

Mr. Bromley laughed, throwing back his handsome hair with a motion of his head, and the laugh brought Mr. Nevin back to Bromley’s side. A laugh sometimes told a good deal to Nevin, and this laugh put his teeth on edge.

“Let me talk to this little girl,” he said, “my hobby just now is children,” and Mr. Bromley could not afford to object to anything so rich and generous a patron would do; Mr. Bromley being the brother-in-law of the proprietor of the art rooms, and Mr. Nevin having dropped in before returning to Newport in order to select some paintings for his new house.

“You would like to take drawing lessons,” he said to Lizzie, and his voice and manner quieted at once the wild and angry beating of her heart. How different from Mr. Bromley’s tone and manner, and in the reaction of her feelings she could hardly keep from crying; but she conquered herself, and the only sign of feeling she showed was the trembling of her under lip when she answered him.

“Do you like to draw?” he went on, and then suddenly noticing the movement of her fingers that held the parcel, he asked:

“Is that some of your work you have brought to show?”

She got very red again and she looked at Mr. Bromley. That gentleman, seeing Mr. Nevin’s interest in the little girl, put off his lofty air and smiled blandly.

"It's such a poor little drawing," burst from Lizzie, "that I'm ashamed to show it."

"Nobody's first efforts are ever very good," said Mr. Nevin smiling, "but, by letting us see it we may be able to tell how you will be likely to get on in the future." And he put out his hand for the parcel.

Lizzie began to unwrap it but her little hands trembled so much that Nevin said with another smile :

"Let me do it."

She felt as she gave it to him, that, no matter how poor he might think it was she should not mind so much, but still her heart beat till she thought it could be seen through her dress.

Nevin drew out the sketch ; it covered two square feet of stiff white paper, and when he saw, crude though it was, the great likeness it bore to the painting before him, he turned with astonishment to Bromley.

"Look here," he said, holding it up against the picture.

"Now, they're going to laugh at it," thought Lizzie, and for an instant her heart seemed to stop beating and the color went out of her face. She did not dare to look at either of them, and when she heard Nevin speak again, his voice sounded to her as if it came from a distance. He was saying to Bromley.

"What does your artist soul say to that?"

But Bromley did not answer, and had Lizzie been looking, she would have seen genuine surprise in his face.

"Where did you see the picture you made your copy from, little girl?" asked Nevin.

The kind tone once more assured her ; she looked up, the color coming back to her cheeks, and the beating to her heart.

"I copied from the picture in the store down stairs ; I used to come every day to the window and

study the picture, and then go home and make part of it."

"What!" exclaimed Nevin, "all done from memory? Bromley, here is genius, needing but your master hand to guide it forth. How old are you?" turning back to Lizzie.

"Ten years last month."

"How long have you been taking lessons in drawing?"

"Once a week in school for a year."

"Who paid for your lessons?"

"They didn't need to be paid for; it's a public school."

"Who is going to pay for them now?"

"My uncle."

Her straightforward manner in answering charmed Nevin.

"Bromley," he said, "I want to speak to you. Wait a few minutes, little girl."

And then he went behind a curtain with the artist, leaving Lizzie in a state of wondering, but not altogether unhappy suspense. She had heard what Nevin said about genius being in her sketch, and how it only needed Bromley's master hand to guide it forth, but she was not sure that even that speech might not be a sort of polite ridicule of her sketch; still, his questions to her, and telling her to wait, seemed to be hopeful signs. Then she wondered if he helped Mr. Bromley in giving lessons, making up her mind at length that it must be so, else why should he be so interested, and why should Mr. Bromley want to please him as he seemed to do.

Behind the curtain Nevin was saying:

"Am I correct, Bromley, in thinking there is talent in that little copy?"

"If she did it without any help, there is a great deal of talent."

"Help, pshaw! You are no reader of faces, if you could mistrust the honesty of that child, Bromley."

Are you willing to take her as a pupil if you get the price you are accustomed to ask?"

"Oh, of course, Mr. Nevin. How could I object? but my price will be too dear, for judging from her appearance she does not come from a very rich home."

"Never mind that; tell your price." And Mr. Bromley, taking advantage of Mr. Nevin's strange interest in the child, put his price at a higher figure than his richest pupil paid; but Mr. Nevin not knowing that, said only:

"Very well, Bromley; you tell this little girl you will give her lessons for," naming such a small amount that Bromley started, and then stared at the speaker, "and I shall give you the remainder of your price, but neither she, nor her family are to know that."

"But, Mr. Nevin! think how my reputation will suffer should such a price as you want me to say to this child, ever become known. Think, my dear sir, I am an artist."

Mr. Bromley made himself as tall as he could do without standing on his toes. Nevin said with mock gravity:

"But think, Mr. Bromley, of the genius you may be bringing out, not to speak of the charity you may be doing by this sacrifice of your artistic dignity: This poor little girl may become a star in the artist world, and then what fame for the great and kind Bromley. Seriously speaking, your terms to her need not be known to any one outside her family."

"Very well, Mr. Nevin, if I can be assured of that."

And they went back to Lizzie, Nevin however, staying a little behind so as to let Bromley talk to her.

When Lizzie heard the price, so little that she knew her uncle would give it at once, and that Mr. Bromley thought her sketch very good, and that she

might begin her lessons on the very next afternoon at his private studio on another street, she could hardly contain her delight. She felt that Mr. Nevin had done it all, and when he came forward, smiling to tell her how glad he was that she was going to have the lessons, she felt that just to thank him was entirely too little; she wanted to do something to show him how she was burning with gratitude, but there was nothing she could do more than to thank him.

Bromley explained to her that he had made his terms so very small because he thought she would be a very attentive pupil, and that he expected her not to tell anybody, and not to let her family mention the price either.

"Now tell me your name and where you live," said Nevin taking out his pocket memorandum, and when he had written both and put back the memorandum, he took up the sketch that still rested on the easel over a corner of the painting.

"I should like to buy this," he said, "for how much will you sell it?"

Amazement and delight kept her from answering. He put his hand in his pocket and drew out a five dollar gold piece. "Will you sell it for this?" he asked smiling.

Then she found her voice.

"It would not be right for me to sell it, because it isn't good enough; but I'll be so glad to give it to you. Please take it."

"No, my generous little girl; I must buy it; I want it as a keepsake of a little girl's industry and attention, for you must have been very attentive to have worked so well from memory; and some day should you be successful enough to earn a good deal of money by your works, it may be pleasant to remember the first picture you sold."

He put the money in her hand, bade her good afternoon, and went again behind the curtain.

Lizzie never knew how she got home that day ; it seemed to her as if her feet did not touch the sidewalk at all, and when red and breathless she bounded into her uncle's presence, both he and Mrs. Morrell who was with him, exclaimed at her appearance.

In her delight at the news she had to tell, she quite forgot her wonted feelings toward Mrs. Morrell, and she looked at her while talking, quite as she did at her uncle. Her uncle as he listened, seemed to be as delighted as Lizzie was ; if his wife had not been present he would have said a great deal ; as it was, he could not refrain from making several queer sounds expressive of his satisfaction, and he looked often at Mrs. Morrell to see the effect of Lizzie's news upon her. Mrs. Morrell was taking it all very silently, but showing in her face what a surprise it was to her.

Lizzie said when she had finished the account :

"So, I *have* talent, Dad, *real* talent, Mr. Bromley said so, and when I get big I may be able to earn a whole lot of money for you."

Then she sprang to his neck, but he watching his wife, whispered :

"Kiss Maria, Lizzie."

She was too happy not to obey him, and she went at once to Mrs. Morrell who was still silent. It was her unusual silence that puzzled her husband ; if she would only say something, but to sit there looking straight before her, was as mysterious to his simple, honest heart as was the "saint-like" way she had acted in the morning.

Mrs. Morrell was silent because she was thinking what her feelings would be were Lizzie her own child, and just as she had begun to realize a little the joy and pride which she should feel in such a case, Lizzie had her arms about her neck and was kissing her. Mrs. Morrell was thrilled just as she had been thrilled by Nanny's caress, and she pressed Lizzie to her. It was the first time they had ever

embraced, and had Lizzie but said, "Aunt Maria," she would have won the woman's whole heart. But never having called Mrs. Morrell aunt, she did not think of doing so now, and had she thought of it she would not have done it, for the term, aunt, implied a closer relationship, than Lizzie was willing to accord Mrs. Morrell, even with all this new and strange tenderness to plead for her. But Mrs. Morrell half expected it, however, and when she found it did not come, she put Lizzie out of her arms, gently though, and went into the other room.

Then Mr. Morrell gave vent to his delight which was two-fold; delight at Lizzie's good fortune, and delight that his wife had kissed her so warmly; he did not dream of his wife's disappointment at not being called aunt.

"I always knew that Maria was a good woman," he said, "and she's proving it now. Just think of the way she hugged you, Lizzie; your own mother couldn't have done it more natural. But it doesn't seem right for her to be so good, all of a sudden," and Mr. Morrell looked very grave, "they say folks that are going to die sometimes changes that way. I hope taint so with Maria."

Lizzie was thinking so much of her wonderful good fortune she hardly heard what her uncle said, and nestling beside him she began again to talk about it.

"Just to think, Dad; it seems as if it was for that five dollars you gave me for Mrs. Tavish that I got five dollars for my drawing."

"Sh;" he said, fearing his wife was in the next room and that she would hear even through the closed door. With all her "saint-like" conduct he was not sure how she would take his having given money away without her knowledge. And Lizzie drew down her face and was vexed with herself for having forgotten to speak in a whisper.

But Mrs. Morrell was not in the next room. She

had gone to the kitchen to have a "good cry," and as it was not often she did that, her tears surprised herself. They did not come from anger, nor from her old jealousy because of the place Lizzie held in her husband's affections, but from disappointment and a strange longing that made her feel quite unlike herself. She cried till the apron she held to her face was wet through ; then, all at once, she started up, saying :

"What an old fool I am ; I'll just go out and look for a washerwoman to do Mrs. Blun's clothes till Mrs. Tavish gets better. Them two that I left," speaking as if some one were listening to her, "won't miss me for awhile."

And drying her eyes and rubbing her face to take away the traces of the tears, she put on her bonnet and shawl and went out. She called on all the washerwomen she knew, but not one would be willing to do the clothes for only a week or two. This made Mrs. Morrell angry ; she thought it was laziness, and when she got home she was so much like her old self, Bartholomew felt easier in his mind about her ; as he said to Lizzie :

"She's more natural, and as long as she isn't scolding it's better to have her like herself."

CHAPTER XXVII.

MR. NEVIN went directly from the art rooms to the hotel where Cornelia, Edwin, and he were stopping during their brief absence from Newport.

Edwin had just joined his sister, and the two were going for a drive ; meeting Nevin, Edwin said :

“ We did not expect you back so soon, nor did I know that I could finish my business down town so quickly, or we might have arranged to return to Newport by this evening’s boat. I am really sorry we did not.”

“ I am not sorry,” said Nevin, “ for in that case I might have missed something pleasant that happened to-day,” and he told about Lizzie Morrell being careful however, not to tell that he was going to pay for her lessons.

Edwin looked vexed.

“ I declare, Egbert,” he said, “ you ought to found an asylum ; then you could have all these wonderful children together.”

“ I mean to have some of them together, when we get our city house in order,” he said, “ at least, I mean to try something of the kind with Cornelia’s help. Our list began with little Helen Blun ; now, we have this clever little Lizzie Morrell. One of the most striking things about her was her courage in going to the art rooms alone ; it has given me a great wish to see her family if she has any besides the uncle she spoke of ; but I shall wait a little and see how she gets on with Bromley.”

Edwin bit his lip ; Cornelia thought with secret vexation that it was too bad something did not throw Nanny Tavish in Egbert's way.

Egbert went on :

"It is better to keep people from doing wrong than to try to make them repent for having done wrong, and if we can help to give the right kind of thoughts to the little ones, and help to make sunshine in their lives, who knows what great good for the future we may be doing."

Edwin said wickedly :

"That may be, but you seem to want to do good and give sunshine to little girls alone ; why do you leave the little boys out in the cold ?"

"They shall not be left out very long," replied Egbert laughing, but at the same time looking in a strange manner at his brother, "the girls appeal more to me because they are less able to make their own way in the world ; but I shall not neglect the boys, and I have a most charming pair to begin with in Mr. Blun's twin sons—manlier little fellows I never saw. But I am keeping you and Cornelia from your drive. I shall meet you when you return."

He left the parlor, Edwin looking after him with clouded brow and tightly compressed lips. Cornelia drawing on her gloves watched him apprehensively expecting that as usual he would begin to vent his anger upon her ; but, to her relief, he said nothing.

She wondered what he would say if he knew of her meeting with Nanny Tavish, and that she had sent ten dollars to Nanny's mother.

About that very time Mrs. Tavish was reading the letter, or rather note in which was inclosed the money. It said :

MRS. TAVISH :

Your little daughter has told you of course how we met. I am sorry she refused to take what I offered in all kindness, hearing from her that you were

ill. Please tell her that I did not mean to hurt her feelings. Fearing that you may be in some need because of your illness, I send the inclosed, begging you to accept it.

Hoping you will soon be better,

“I am, Your friend,

“CORNELIA INGOLDSBY.”

So, it was not Miss Ingoldsby who had sent the five dollars after all, was Mrs. Tavish's first thought on reading the note; then, as she held up the bill to Nanny, and told her the message that had come with it, she hardly knew whether to be glad, or sorry. She almost made up her mind to give back the money with an answer of thanks, but Miss Ingoldsby, as if to insure herself against such a return, had given no address.

“Nanny said :

“Miss Ingoldsby is kind to send us the money after the way I acted to her, isn't she, mamma?”

“Yes ;” replied her mother, but in an absent-minded way as if she were not thinking at all of what the little girl had said, and Nanny wondered. It seemed to her as if the ten dollars did not give her mother half the pleasure the five dollars had given her the day before, and very much puzzled, she said again :

“You don't seem a bit glad, mamma, are you sorry to have to take it?”

That question roused Mrs. Tavish from her troubled thoughts, and seeing the puzzled, questioning look in the child's eyes, she said quickly :

“I am very thankful to get it; indeed, all this help now when we are in such need, seems so wonderful that I can't understand it.”

Mrs. Tavish did not understand it—to come from a distant western city to be helped by one of *them*.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE Monday on which Lizzie Morrell was to take her first lesson from Mr. Bromley seemed to her to be very long in coming. In order to make Sunday pass more quickly she went to see Nanny, and she even would have stopped to see Thimig had the shop door been open, so as to tell him that in spite of his blundering, he had done his errand pretty well. She laughed every time she thought of Nanny's account of him.

How surprised Lizzie would have been did she know that Mrs. Morrell had been to see Mrs. Tavish that very morning, and that she had spent an hour in attending to the invalid. But Mrs. Tavish and Nanny kept that very secret, only when Nanny went to the door with Lizzie, she spoke again about thinking kindly of everybody. Lizzie said to herself as she went home :

"I wonder what she's preaching to me like that for ?"

But she was too happy in her anticipations of the next day to care much about it.

Mrs. Morrell also had anticipations of the next day, but not quite such pleasant ones as Lizzie. She had made up her mind since she could not get a washerwoman for the Bluns, to keep her word to Mrs. Tavish, by turning washerwoman herself, but she did not intend to let Mrs. Tavish know that, and in order to have Lizzie out of the way on Monday, she told her she might go out an hour before the

time for her lesson. Lizzie, greatly astonished, looked at her.

"It will give you a chance to take a little walk," said Mrs. Morrell, and Lizzie, still very much astonished, but not at all sorry to have so much time, did as she was told.

Bromley's studio was in a building with a good many other studios ; to get to it one had to go up several flights of stairs, and to make many turns. It was not at all like his brother-in-law's art rooms ; instead of elegant paintings there were only half finished pencil sketches, and for furniture nothing but the stools on which the pupils sat, and the plain tables where they worked. There were two young women busy there now, but they put down their pencils when Lizzie came in, and looked at her with a good deal of surprise. When they found she could draw nearly as well as they did, they were still more surprised, and when after her lesson she gathered up the copies Mr. Bromley gave her for home work, and went out of the studio without even looking at them, they asked Bromley all sorts of questions about her. Bromley put on a look of knowing everything they asked, but he only said while he ran his fingers through his beautiful hair :

"I cannot tell you, young ladies, what you want to know ; I can only say that she has great talent, and it is given to me to develop it."

Ever after the young women treated Lizzie with a great deal of respect.

Had not Lizzie been so full of her delightful work, she must have noticed much more than she did, Mrs. Morrell's strange actions during the week ; that good woman seemed to want the little girl to give all her time to her drawing and to waiting on her uncle, and when she brought her husband's meals to him, she actually brought another tray containing a repast for Lizzie, saying :

"It is pleasant for you two to eat together while Lizzie is home from school."

Mr. Morrell began to feel again, that, "Maria was not long for this world," and it made him sad, but he did not say anything about it to Lizzie.

Toward the end of the week Lizzie began to suspect that Mrs. Morrell was only maneuvering to keep her, Lizzie, out of the kitchen; and what was Mrs. Morrell doing? Lizzie caught glimpses of freshly ironed clothes that she knew did not belong to any member of the Morrell family, and once she saw in a closet—Mrs. Morrell had forgotten to close the door—a brand new clothes basket, but before she could look any further, Mrs. Morrell shut the door in a way that showed her vexation for having left it open.

Lizzie told it all to her uncle and he was as much puzzled as his niece.

"Leave Maria, alone, Lizzie; he said, don't be prying into anything she doesn't want you to see. Maria's a good woman, as I always said; she has her faults of course, as who hasn't, but, she'll not do anything far astray, and whatever she may be at now, Lizzie, it's all right, I'm thinking, and if we'll have a little patience, it'll come out by and by."

The work that Mrs. Morrell maneuvered so constantly to hide from her husband and niece, was the washing and ironing of Mrs. Blun's clothes, and on Saturday afternoon as soon as Lizzie had gone to the studio, and Bartholomew had prepared himself for his afternoon nap, she set forth with the new basket well filled with the clothes of the Bluns.

If Mrs. Morrell were obliged to do such work she would not have held her head so high, nor have gone down the stairs as if she wanted all the people in the house to hear her. But, as the work was done for somebody else through kindness, she wanted to show her neighbors that she was not ashamed of it.

Strangely enough, not one of her neighbors had seen her bringing the clothes from Mrs. Blun's, and dur-

ing the week, if any of them had noticed a larger quantity and a different kind of garments on Mrs. Morrell's clothes lines, no one, in her hearing at least, passed any remark about it. Now, however, she made up her mind that some of them should both see and say something, and accordingly, at the strange, loud, creaking noise she made with the basket, Mrs. Tappan hurried out into the entry.

Mrs. Tappan's door had been partly open as were most of the doors in the house, owing to the warm weather ; and Mrs. Tappan never having quite made up with Mrs. Morrell since the angry words the two had about Lizzie, put her hands on her sides and stared without saying anything.

Mrs. Morrell made more noise, and put on a look of severe goodness. The loud sounds brought another spectator to the scene, and she being on very friendly terms with Mrs. Morrell, said kindly :

“Why, Mrs. Morrell, what are you carrying such a heavy load for?”

“It's not for me to say, Mrs. Carten,” replied Mrs. Morrell, “it wouldn't be becoming for me to tell what I'm carrying this basket for, but those as knows my husband knows there aint no reason for me to burden myself this way,” going slowly down the stairs while she was speaking, “but I'm one of the kind as couldn't fold my hands and take my ease when there was an abscess and other kinds of misery going on around me. That's all there's in it, Mrs. Carten, but those as has eyes let 'em see, and those as has ears let 'em hear,” and Mrs. Morrell by this time having reached the bottom of the flight, and turned into the passage that led to another flight, went on with her head very high indeed.

“It's queer eyes that wouldn't see it's family washing she's doing,” said Mrs. Tappan, but Mrs. Morrell laughed. It amused her to let that hateful Mrs. Tappan think for awhile she was actually driven to do family washing, and she chuckled to herself as

she pictured Mrs. Tappan's anger when she found out her mistake, and she went on full of delight. One great cause of her pleasure was Mrs. Tavish's ignorance of who was doing Mrs. Blun's washing; she supposed of course that Mrs. Morrell had found some one to do it.

When Mrs. Morrell, perspiring under her load, rang the basement bell of Mrs. Blun's house, Jane came to the door; she asked kindly for Mrs. Tavish, and while she took the basket of clothes she bade Mrs. Morrell seat herself; then she said:

"I told Mrs. Blun all that you told me last Monday to tell her, about Mrs. Tavish's sickness and how much she needed money, and how you had undertaken to do the clothes as a kindness to Mrs. Tavish, and that you'd be thankful to get the money to-day when you brought the clothes home. I told her all that last Monday, right after you left here, and to-day, when I saw her getting ready to go out I told her again about the bill, and how it was due now over a month, and I asked her to leave the money with me for you—"

"And didn't she?" interrupted Mrs. Morrell too much out of patience to wait for Jane to finish.

"No, she didn't," said Jane, "and what was more Mrs. Blun said she didn't believe Mrs. Tavish could be in such need, and anyway that Mrs. Tavish would have to wait a few days longer for she was not ready to pay the bill just then."

"Oh, them's the rich people for you," said Mrs. Morrell wiping her face, "so long as they themselves have full and plently it's no matter about anyone else."

"I'll tell you what to do," Jane went on again, "for it's a shame that poor Mrs. Tavish should be put off this way when she's earned the money and it isn't that Mrs. Blun hasn't it; her husband gives her money to pay every bill promptly. I've seen him do it, and I've heard him tell her to pay the bills

without any delay. He's an odd man, but he's an honest man, and he's given her the money for Mrs. Tavish I'm sure; but she's spent it, and if you'll go to his store, it's not so very far from here, just down on Broadway, and tell the case to him, he'll pay you, but don't let him, or anybody else know that *I* told you to go there."

Mrs. Morrell's little eyes twinkled.

"That's just what I'll do," she said, "see himself. The men are always better than the women when it's a matter of justice to a woman, and you needn't be afraid that I'll tell who it was that put me up to go to him."

Waiting only to have the clothes taken out of the basket she set forth for Mr. Blun's store. There, when met by Mr. Blun, she made a deep courtesy, keeping the big basket all the time on her arm.

Mr. Blun looked at her: she was so very big, and she was dressed so gaudily, having on a very light colored calico dress, a very small black silk cape, and a bonnet much too small to set properly on her fluffy hair; then the bonnet had orange colored strings which being untied because of the heat, hung like bright streamers on each side of her immense bosom.

Mr. Blun made up his mind that she was a most undisciplined woman, and he asked in a very severe tone:

"What is your business with me?"

Mrs. Morrell put her basket down and placed her feet together evenly on the floor; then she said:

"Am I speaking to Mrs. Blun's husband?"

"You are speaking to Mr. Blun," he replied very severely, in order to put down at once the attempt to place his wife first.

"Well, it's all the same, I suppose," looking down at him in a way that made the clerks laugh to themselves, "whether you're Mister, or not, doesn't matter to me. But I wanted to be sure that you were Mrs. Blun's husband, because I want you to pay Mrs. Blun's washing bill."

She stopped a moment to take breath, and Mr. Blun not knowing that Mrs. Tavish was not doing the work as usual, thought there must be some mistake.

"You have made a great blunder, woman," he said, "I never hired you to do the washing of my family."

"Just wait a minute, Mr. Blun ; whatever blundering there's in it, it's on your side for not paying your bills yourself instead of giving your wife the chance to spend the money for something else," and then, after she had drawn a long breath, she gave the full account of how she happened to be doing the work instead of Mrs. Tavish.

Mr. Blun was amazed and indignant, but he did not say a word till she had finished. Then he turned to one of the clerks.

"I am going out ; I may be gone three, or four hours." Then he turned to Mrs. Morrell, saying shortly :

"Come with me."

She, wondering very much, took up her basket and followed him, but when they gained the street, she stepped out boldly beside him. They were a strange looking pair, made stranger looking still by the speed with which Mr. Blun walked, and which made Mrs. Morrell pant to keep up with him. Then her face was as red as it could well be, and her orange colored strings floated behind her like the streamers of a flag.

As they turned the corner of a street that led out of Broadway they came full upon Lizzie leaving the studio. She was so surprised that she stood as if she were fastened to the sidewalk. Mr. Blun with his mouth tightly shut, and his eyes looking nowhere but just in front of him, took no notice of her, and Mrs. Morrell finding it as much as she could do to keep up with the little gentleman, put her finger to her lip and shook her head as signs to Lizzie that she was to say nothing of what she saw : but

Lizzie stood looking after them till the amusing sight of the little man walking so quickly, and the big woman with the big basket, and the orange colored streamers, almost running to keep up with him, made her laugh. Then, all at once she thought to follow them. She knew the little man was Mr. Blun, and calling to mind the strange actions of Mrs. Morrell during the week, and what Nanny Tavish had told her about a friend having hired some one to do Mrs. Blun's washing till her mother should get better, she wondered could it be that Mrs. Morrell herself was doing this work. But, if that were the case, why was Mr. Blun with Mrs. Morrell? What did it all mean, and why did Mrs. Morrell want to hide it? Thus thinking she kept at a very safe distance till she saw them both go up the steps of Mr. Blun's house, where Mr. Blun opened the door with his latch key, and sent Mrs. Morrell, basket and all into the house in advance of him.

Then Lizzie was only kept from running home and telling Dad all about it, by recollecting the signs Mrs. Morrell had made to her.

When Mr. Blun entered the house he rang for Jane, and when Jane came, and saw who was with Mr. Blun, she was much frightened; she did not think for a moment that what she had told Mrs. Morrell to do, would end in this way.

"Is Mrs. Blun in?" he asked.

"Yes sir; she came in a few minutes ago."

"Tell her if she has taken her bonnet off, to put it on again and to come here."

Jane went to give the message, her heart beating very rapidly. What was the odd little man going to do now? In spite of her pity for Mrs. Tavish, she began to feel some pity for Mrs. Blun.

Mrs. Blun had not had time to remove her bonnet because she had gone directly to the looking glass to hold up to her fair face some light blue China silk. She had just returned from buying it with the money that should have gone to pay Mrs. Tavish.

That money had haunted and tempted her for a week, and fondly expecting to go to a party at the Ingoldsbys in a few weeks, the silk with white lace trimmings would be just the thing to make a dress ; and as she thought how becoming it would be, and how useless to ask her husband for money to get it, she made up her mind to brave his anger and buy it herself.

Jane, seeing that her mistress had not put off her bonnet, said nothing about that part of Mr. Blun's message ; nor did she tell who was with Mr. Blun ; but she added so that her mistress would make haste.

"Mr. Blun seems in a great hurry ; he'd like you to come right away."

"Very well, Jane," and she put the roll of silk out of sight, and tripped lightly down to the parlor. The door was open, her husband standing near the threshold, and almost beside him, the big coarse looking woman holding before her with her arms folded through its handle, a large empty clothes basket.

Mrs. Blun started back too much astonished to have voice enough to ask what the scene meant. But her husband said :

"I want you to come out with this woman and me, Mrs. Blun."

Mrs. Blun recovered her voice.

"Out with you in company with that creature ? what do you mean ?"

Mrs. Morrell straightened herself.

"I desire, Mrs. Blun, that you do as I said, immediately," repeated her husband.

"What for ?" demanded the lady.

Though this was the first time she had seen Mrs. Morrell, the clothes basket told part of the story, and her own conscience the other part, but she thought it better to pretend that she did not understand it at all.

“You shall know what for when we get where we are going,” Mr. Blun said.

“But I don’t want to go ; tell me what the business is, here.”

Mr. Blun raised his voice and spoke more sternly.

“Once more, Mrs. Blun, I say that you are to come out with this woman and me ; if you refuse I shall go alone, and you shall take what will happen after.”

“What would happen after.” That threat decided her, knowing that her husband could and would do the most disagreeable things, and after all perhaps it was not about the washerwoman’s bill.

“I’ll go,” she said shortly, but what was her horror to find when they got to the street, that her husband after he had given his arm to her, offered Mrs. Morrell his other arm ; and Mrs. Morrell promptly took it.

Mrs. Blun stopped short trying to release herself, but her husband held her tightly.

“I shall not walk in such company,” she said hotly.

“Then, I shall make a scene here in the street,” Mr. Blun said with grim satisfaction, and knowing he would do so, she again went on. A little further and they passed Helen and her companions of the private school.

“Why, Helen ; there’s your father and mother,” said one of them, “and your father’s got a big fat washerwoman on his arm. Why, Helen, where are they going ?”

Helen was too much astonished to answer, and then her companions laughed at the amusing sight, for Mr. Blun was walking so rapidly his wife had to step out at a very lively pace to keep up with him, and Mrs. Morrell’s gay strings floated again behind her.

Helen was overwhelmed with shame.

“The big fat one is your washerwoman, aint she, Helen ?” said the girl who had spoken first, “is she

the mother of the little girl that was carrying your clothes home the other day, and that you said your mother wouldn't let you have anything to do with?"

"No, she aint," said Helen fiercely, and beginning to go toward her own house.

"Oh, dear me! you needn't get so angry about it," said the first speaker again, "it aint our fault if your father and mother keep company with a washerwoman though they don't let *you* do it."

The last words were said with a childish sneer at which they all laughed again, and Helen went faster toward her own house.

"I don't know as my mother would want *me* to play with any one whose parents keep company with washerwomen," said a second little girl getting very bold as she saw how Helen retreated.

A third child said :

"People who go to public schools are common, anyhow."

Then the fourth and last of the little company said :

"Such airs as Helen Blun gave herself the other day : ha, ha !"

The whole four joined in the shout of laughter, and Helen ran from it, never stopping till she had placed the basement door between herself and them.

In the meantime on went Mr. Blun and his companions, not a word being spoken by either. Blun heard on one side Mrs. Morrell panting, and on the other his wife gasping from anger. They were going to the home of Mrs. Tavish, Mr. Blun having so instructed Mrs. Morrell before his wife joined them.

What Mrs. Morrell's thoughts were it was not easy to tell from her red excited face ; perhaps though, much as she had tried to hide from Mrs. Tavish how she herself had turned washerwoman in order to benefit Mrs. Tavish, she was not sorry that now the truth about it would come out.

When they got to the house Mrs. Morrell drop-

ping Mr. Blun's arm, led the way with a very self satisfied manner. She brushed aside the dirty, half clad children who stared at her, and she feigned not to see the slovenly looking women who stared with as much curiosity as the children did.

Mrs. Blun tried to hold back, begging :

"Don't ask me to go in here, Elliott ; let me wait for you."

But he forced her on, answering :

"You *must* come in, Mrs. Blun."

And go in she did, actually on the heels of Mrs. Morrell. That good woman all out of breath still managed to say to the amazed Mrs. Tavish and Nanny :

"I had to bring the pair of them ; Mr. Blun would have it so."

Mrs. Tavish rose from her chair, but she was not able to stand up straight on account of her back, and all she could say was :

"Is it possible, Mr. and Mrs. Blun."

Nanny who had been sitting at a table reading, rose also, dropping her book to the floor in her surprise, and not even thinking to pick it up. Mr. Blun had noticed the perfect cleanliness and order of the room ; he had also noticed its poverty.

He waved his hand as if he were making a speech, from his wife to Mrs. Tavish, saying to his wife :

"Behold, woman ! your work ! this widow was sick and in want. The sum of ten cents alone remained to her and her offspring. She sends that offspring to you for the just and proper payment of her bill for your washing. What answer does she receive ? let your undisciplined soul answer. A friend, this woman," waving his hand at Mrs. Morrell, "not able to find a laundress who would do the washing of your family, undertakes to do it herself. She leaves word at your house, that you may not forget the payment of your just debt when she returns the clothes. What answer does she again receive ? let

your undisciplined soul once more tell. This woman comes to me and I have brought you here that you may give testimony to the discipline which *I* endeavor to keep in my family. Where, Mrs. Blun, is the money I gave you to pay this bill two weeks ago?"

"What a man for a husband!" said Mrs. Morrell to herself, "but for all that he told my case just lovely."

Mrs. Blun was trembling not from fear but from anger and shame.

"How dare you bring me to this place on such an errand?" she said, speaking so loud that it was well Mrs. Morrell had taken care to shut the door tightly, "and how dare you bring me to account before these people for what I did with your money? I spent it. There!"

Mrs. Tavish only then seemed quite to understand it, and she said in real distress:

"Oh, Mr. Blun, I am so sorry this has taken place. I didn't dream that Mrs. Morrell herself was doing the work, or that her kindness to me would lead her so far. I am thankful to her, but I am very sorry for Mrs. Blun."

Mrs. Morrell was disgusted.

"You needn't be sorry for her," she said, "it'll teach her not to let the poor suffer when she owes them anything, and though you're a tartar of a man, Mr. Blun, I honor you for your sense of justice. Your name ought to be writ up on a monument for it."

"Elliott, are you going to let that creature insult me?" said Mrs. Blun.

"I aint no creature," put in Mrs. Morrell, making believe not to see the imploring look of Mrs. Tavish, "I'm a woman as good as you are."

Mr. Blun was taking out his pocket book and speaking to Mrs. Tavish.

"Your bill for the month is twelve dollars."

She said "yes," in a low tone.

He added two dollars to the amount.

"That is to make up for Mrs. Blun's delay in paying you, and in future present your bill at my store."

Then he turned to his wife.

"We shall go now."

Mrs. Morrell opened the door for them, courtesying to Mr. Blun, and saying to Mrs. Blun, whose face was scarlet from her hair to her neck.

"Don't have hard feelings, ma'am ; it's all for your own good."

But Mrs. Blun shot by her, out of the hall and down the steps, and only that it was daylight she would have run to get away from her husband. As it was, she was obliged to let him overtake her, to put her arm again through his, and to listen to a lecture on his horrible discipline. The only comfort she had was the thought of the China silk which she had in spite of him.

"Mrs. Morrell shut the door again as soon as husband and wife were well out, and she, and Mrs. Tavish, and Nanny looked at each other, but before any one spoke, Mrs. Morrell thinking of the amusing scenes of the afternoon, began to laugh, and she laughed so heartily that she had to put her fat hands on her sides and let the tears stream down her cheeks. Nanny laughed too, for the sight of Mrs. Morrell was as amusing as any of the scenes which made that good woman herself laugh, and Mrs. Tavish, trying to look grave, ended by laughing as heartily as either of her companions. And when Mrs. Morrell, recovering her breath, described all the comical things that had happened, the laughter of all three was renewed. It was some time before Mrs. Tavish could find voice to say :

"I don't know how to thank you, Mrs. Morrell. I never dreamed that you would do the washing yourself."

“If you say another word you’ll take away all my pleasure,” said Mrs. Morrell, “it’s been as good as a play for me, and I’m so proud you got your money. You’ll never have any trouble about it again.”

Mrs. Tavish bit her lip and looked down. She would much rather have suffered than have had Mrs. Blun made so much ashamed, but how could she say so to Mrs. Morrell without seeming to be displeased with what that ignorant but kind hearted woman had done in all charity. Mrs. Morrell not dreaming of what Mrs. Tavish was thinking, went on :

“I didn’t see Mrs. Blun last Monday when I went for the clothes, and I’m thinking there’s little danger of her coming in my sight next Monday when I go for them.”

Here was another puzzling thought for Mrs. Tavish. She did not know what were Mrs. Morrell’s circumstances ; whether she did even the washing of her own family. In her doubt she ventured to say :

I am getting well so fast, I think I could do the clothes next week.”

Mrs. Morrell would not listen to such a thing. She had plenty of time, she said, and she did not mind the work.

“Then you must take pay for it,” ventured Mrs. Tavish again, and beginning to roll up the bills Mr. Blun had given her.

Mrs. Morrell stopped her.

“I have full and plenty, Mrs. Tavish, with no want for anything ; and it’d be a shame when the Lord gives me a chance to do a kind act if I didn’t do it. So, don’t say anything more.”

And the matter rested.

CHAPTER XXIX.

LIZZIE MORRELL was a very much puzzled little girl, and the more she tried to explain to herself the queer actions of Mrs. Morrell the more puzzled she became. Mrs. Morrell and Mrs. Tavish did not even know each other, how then could it be that Mrs. Morrell was doing Mrs. Blun's family washing for Mrs. Tavish? beside, if such were the case would not Nanny have told her? And it could not be surely that Mrs. Morrell hearing in some way of Mrs. Blun's need of a washerwoman had taken the work so as to earn money for herself. If only she could tell her uncle what a relief it would be, even though he should not be able to help her to understand it: but she still felt bound by a feeling of honor not to say anything.

She was walking very slowly, and she was thinking so deeply, that she did not notice when she reached the undertaker's shop, nor did she see Thimig who, as usual was standing in the doorway.

"Lizzie," he called timidly.

She stopped and looked up at him.

"Won't you come in a minute? I has something on my mind as worries it like a crooked screw wot's got in and has to come out."

Lizzie went into the shop but she would not sit down. They were quite alone and Thimig went on:

"Lizzie, if there was a boy once, wot never did no harm, but wot was always a being blamed and a gettin' hissself into scrapes without any fault of his'n, would you be sorry for that ere boy?"

Lizzie wanted to laugh, but she was touched by the tone of his voice, and the imploring look in his big, stupid eyes, and she said without even smiling :

“Of course I would.”

“And if that boy, Lizzie, was a comin’ from an errand, an errand wot had no questions answered, and he was run into by a big animal and sent a spinning till he felt like as if the sky had come down to the sidewalk, and the sidewalk had a flew up to the sky, would you a felt sorry for that ere boy, Lizzie?”

This time it was very hard to keep from laughing and Lizzie only nodded ; she could not trust herself to speak. She thought the animal he spoke of was a runaway horse.

“And if that boy, Lizzie, when he picked hisself up was so flummed that he didn’t know hisself, and if he was so scared by that animal that he hadn’t no wits left, would you a been sorry still for that ere boy, Lizzie?”

Lizzie smiled, but she managed to say :

“I should have been very sorry for him.”

“And if Lizzie, when that animal wot so flummed that boy that he forgot hisself entirely—that he didn’t think of no questions answered, but just went and let out to that animal all questions answered, would you a been sorry still for that ere boy, and could you, oh, Lizzie, could you forgive that ere boy?”

“What do you mean?” Lizzie asked, too full of wonder to care to laugh now, “I don’t understand all your talk about an animal.”

“Oh, Lor! and I can’t tell you, for I told that ere animal forty-four wild horses wouldn’t draw it out,” said Thimig wringing his hands.

Lizzie lost all patience.

“Oleander Thimig, what did you call me in here for if you were not going to speak so I could understand you. I don’t know what you’re talking about.”

She turned to leave the shop.

“Oh, Lor!” he said again, “she won’t take and I can’t give, because I said forty-four wild horses wouldn’t draw it out.”

Lizzie turned back.

“I was a talking of an animal.”

“I know you were,” she said, “the funniest kind of an animal I ever heard of.”

“It had on a bonnet with yaller strings.”

Lizzie’s face was a study from amazement, and the thought that broke into her mind all at once.

“And a black cape, Lizzie,” Thimig went on, “and a calico dress wot showed her feet.”

“Why, that’s Mrs. Morrell.”

“I said it was a animal, Lizzie; and so it was a animal wot flummerged that boy so, he took that animal to where there was to be no questions answered.”

Lizzie fairly jumped.

“Oleander Thimig, you don’t mean that you told on me to Mrs. Morrell, and took her to Mrs. Tavish’s house?”

Thimig fell on his knees, crying:

“I am the boy wot done it, Lizzie. I took that animal wot I didn’t tell you was Mrs. Morrell, to that woman wot had no questions answered, and I told that animal wot you sent me there for.”

“Oleander Thimig!” and the anger and disgust in his companion’s voice started the boy to bohooing aloud:

“I thought you wouldn’t pity that ere boy when you knowed it all,” he whimpered, “but it was in my mind like a crooked screw and it had to come out.”

“But I trusted you, Oleander, not to tell anybody, and now you’ve gone and actually told Mrs. Morrell.”

“Say that animal, Lizzie, because I told her forty-four wild horses wouldn’t draw it out of my bosom as to where she’d been; and they didn’t draw it

out ; it was you as drawed it out—you guessed who that animal was.”

Lizzie’s anger gave way to laughter ; the boy’s appearance was so amusing ; then, also she could forgive him for not having kept her secret since what he told her now made clear so much that had puzzled her. She said, still laughing :

“Get up Oleander, I forgive you ; I’m not a bit angry with you.”

She did not add though, that she would never trust him with a secret again.

He got up at once wiping his face with the cuff of his jacket, and as that had a good many dirt and dust marks on it, the same were left on his face. Then he held out his big, and not over clean hand.

“Will you shake hands, Lizzie, to kind of clinch your pardon like?”

She shook hands and turned to go, but Oleander was not quite satisfied. He wanted to say something in favor of the “animal,” by way of atonement for having told on it.

“That ere animal, Lizzie, was a having mighty kind feelings to you. That ere animal said it was good of you to send that money wot went to no questions answered.”

Lizzie pursed up her lips and raised her eyebrows, as if she did not quite believe in the kind feelings, but she made no answer, and Thimig made a little desperate by her silence, said again :

“That animal didn’t want you to know Lizzie, where she’d been.”

“Oh, I suppose not,” said Lizzie carelessly, breaking from him, but when she reached the door she turned to say :

“I won’t tell that animal anything you’ve told me.”

Thimig went to the door and looked after her ; then he went back and rubbed his face and his head as hard as he could, after which he sat down on one of the stools and said to himself :

"I feels better. She thought I was a fool the other day when I talked so as to keep full in my bosom wot Mrs. Morrell wanted kept there; least-ways Mr. Brush said as them was her thoughts. Now that was kinder hard, so to-day when I sees her I talks the other way. I didn't tell on Mrs. Morrell—I put it in a obscure way, but Lizzie's smart; she ketches a fellow's meaning before he knows what words he's a goin' to say. And she just got the whole thing in a minute like a boy wot's eatin' mince pie. So I feels easy."

Lizzie, however, did not feel so easy; she could not understand why Mrs. Morrell knowing the errand Thimig had performed, had said nothing about it; it was very unlike her, for according to her old fashion she would have scolded, and stormed, and made everybody very miserable. Then, for Nanny not to have told of Mrs. Morrell's visit; it seemed really unkind, and Lizzie's cheeks began to burn with anger, and to burn more and more as she recollected Nanny's little parting speeches about thinking kindly of everybody. Did she mean them for Lizzie because Lizzie did not think kindly of Mrs. Morrell? and then came the thought of Mrs. Morrell's own changed conduct during the whole of the past week—her unusual kindness to Lizzie and tenderness to her husband.

Then she wondered if Mrs. Morrell had told Mrs. Tavish who sent the five dollar gold piece, and if she had done so, why neither mother nor daughter had said anything; perhaps they felt hurt and that was the reason of their silence. Altogether, Lizzie's mind was in a sad state of doubt, dissatisfaction and wonder, and the only comfort she expected was telling her uncle all that Thimig had just told her. In telling him she would not be breaking her word to Thimig, for she had only promised not to tell Mrs. Morrell, and Dad, she knew would make the same promise. If but she could have told also what she

had seen in the street that afternoon, what a light it might pour on to Dad's mind, but she still felt bound to say nothing about that.

Mr. Morrell awoke from his afternoon nap very contented and very cheerful. His improved health and a whole week of amiable humor from Maria had put him into the very best of spirits, and as he leaned back in the chair and looked at the parrot that had been dozing also, and that did not seem to want to wake up yet, he was a picture of smiling happiness, and he was looking like that when Lizzie came in.

"Is Mrs. Morrell in?" she asked quickly.

"No, she went out soon after you did; she went out by the kitchen door so I didn't see her go."

"Well, Dad, what do you think of all this?" and taking off her hat she threw herself on the floor beside him, with her hands resting on one of his knees, and told him what she had heard from Thimig. She was too impatient to imitate the whole of Thimig's odd manner and speech, but what she did give of it made her uncle laugh heartily and instead of being puzzled he said when she had finished:

"All that proves what I've all along been saying, Lizzie, that Maria's a good woman. To my mind it looks for certain, taken in connection with the things you saw last week, the heaps of clothes that didn't belong to us, and the new basket peeping out of the closet, that Maria's been a doing some washing for Mrs. Tavish. You said Mrs. Tavish's little girl told you a friend had got a washerwoman for her mother: that friend, Lizzie, is *Maria*."

He said the last words with a very wise air.

"And now," he went on, "it's this goodness of hers, this blessed goodness, as I may call it, that's made her the way she's been this week. Lizzie; Maria's a good woman, and I always said so."

CHAPTER XXX.

WHEN Mrs. Morrell left Mrs. Tavish's house, she was in such a good natured and happy humor, she smiled at everybody she met, and she forgot the big clothes basket on her arm till she was near her own home; then, knowing that Lizzie would be in the kitchen getting supper, she felt that she could not go in without being seen by either her, or Bartholomew.

The undertaker's shop was near, and there she went to leave the basket till Monday.

Luckily Mr. Brush was in the shop, for Thimig who was in the back part of the store, at the first sight of the large figure entering, went head and heels into a big, empty ice box that was beside him. He did it so quickly that Brush could not tell how, or where the boy had gone, and the shadows being deep about the place where Thimig had been standing, Mrs. Morrell had not seen him.

"Orlander's not here," she said, looking round.

"I'll be blest if he wasn't here two seconds ago," said Brush, looking round also in startled wonder.

"Oh, don't mind, Mr. Brush," said Mrs. Morrell, "it don't make any difference. I only want to leave this basket here till Monday. It's a load this warm evening to be carrying it up two flights of stairs, and as I'll be wanting it Monday, it'll be handy."

"Oh, certainly, Mrs. Morrell; leave it by all means—but where the dickens did that boy go?"

“Don’t mind, Mr. Brush ; I didn’t want to see him in perticler, though Orlander and me is great friends. I have entire confidence in Orlander ; I’d trust him with anything. Though he’s not very smart, he’s very safe ; he’ll not tell a thing you tell him to keep secret.”

“Oh, Lor ! hear what that animal’s a saying,” groaned Thimig to himself.

Brush stared at Mrs. Morrell, divided between amazement at the boy’s strange disappearance and astonishment at the woman’s extraordinary confidence in Thimig.

Mrs. Morrell turned to leave the store fanning herself with an end of her cape as she went, and saying :

“I’m obliged to you, Mr. Brush, and you’re sure the basket won’t be in the way.”

“No, to be sure not ; but where in thunder did that boy go ?”

Mrs. Morrell having put down her basket was indifferent to where Thimig had gone, and she went smiling on her way while Brush began a search. In a moment he saw the dark mass in the ice box. The mass was beginning to move, and to the undertaker’s astonishment, Thimig raised himself up, his face black from perspiration and dust, and he said dolefully :

“She’s gone, aint she ?”

“Yes. she’s gone. But why did you hide ? what are you afraid of her for ?”

“I aint afraid of her,” he said, with all his stupidity not liking to be thought a coward, “but when you’ve gone and called her a animal, and let something wot she told you be drawed out of you, what’s a feller to do, eh, Mr. Brush ?”

And the better to hear what Mr. Brush would advise, Thimig sat down on the edge of the ice box with his hands on his knees, and his face turned up to Mr. Brush with such a dirty and woe-begone look that Brush roared with laughter.

“And you’re the one she has such confidence in,” he said as soon as he could speak.

“That’s wot troubles me, Mr. Brush, and it troubled me when I was a lyin’ here a smotherin’ in this ere box, and heard her say that. But wot’s a feller to do when some one wot he has a regard for thinks he’s a fool because he can’t tell something. He aint going to stand that, and he tells it in a obscure way, but that person wot he has a regard for is smart, and she ketches wot he said he wouldn’t tell. Now, what’s a feller to do in them circumstances, Mr. Brush?”

But Mr. Brush could give no advice for such circumstances; he could only laugh till he was tired, and then he said:

“Thimig, you’re the biggest clown out of a circus.”

Mrs. Morrell went home with, to use her own words, “a heart as light as a feather,” and going in by the door of her husband’s room she spoke to him so merrily that when she left him in order to take off the bonnet with the yellow strings and the black silk cape, he nodded to the parrot, and said to it softly—having no one else to speak to:

“It’s her blessed goodness makes her so happy.”

In the kitchen Mrs. Morrell said to Lizzie:

“It’s a great comfort to me, Lizzie, to have you so handy about the house. I don’t know what I’d do when I go out if it wasn’t for you.”

But Lizzie made no reply. She did not know when Mrs. Morrell’s temper might break forth again in spite of all her sweetness now, and she could not help feeling sore about Nanny Tavish. It never came into her mind that Mrs. Morrell might have told Nanny not to tell.

The next day Lizzie felt still worse when she thought of Nanny, she almost made up her mind not to pay her usual visit to see how Mrs. Tavish was getting on, but her uncle said when his wife was not listening:

“Don’t be giving way to feelings like them, Lizzie; like as not they’re all wrong. Maybe——” a thought coming all at once to him— “Maria told them not to say anything about her.”

But for all that, Lizzie with her quick, open nature, still felt hurt, and though she paid her visit to Nanny it was with such a cold, constrained manner that Nanny herself felt hurt, and Nanny, feeling that she had done nothing to deserve such coldness, was too proud to ask the reason.

When Lizzie went, Nanny said with a sob to her mother:

“Why do people act so? why didn’t she say what she was angry about? it wasn’t like her a bit, mamma; in school she says right out what she thinks.”

But Mrs. Tavish knew not what to answer; she could only try to comfort the child by saying there must be some mistake.

On the Monday morning Mrs. Morrell got her basket from Mr. Brush’s own hands. He said Thimig was sick and wouldn’t be in the shop before the afternoon; but there was a twinkle in his eye as he spoke which did not seem to be in accord with his words. Mrs. Morrell however, did not notice that, and she went on her way leaving Brush to laugh to himself at Thimig’s illness which was nothing but fear of meeting Mrs. Morrell.

Mrs. Morrell called for Mrs. Blun’s clothes, and when she was coming out of the area, she came upon Helen who had been making saucy eyes at her companions of the private school; they were standing on the opposite walk.

Mrs. Morrell stopped, and held out her hand.

“Why you’re the little girl what came about my Lizzie, once, aint you? How do you do?”

A shout of laughter from the delighted little vixens opposite, who, though they did not hear what

Mrs. Morrell said, saw her action, made Helen desperate.

"I don't shake hands with washerwomen," she said, drawing back and getting very red.

Mrs. Morrell got red also.

"Don't you dear? well, your father didn't mind giving his arm to a washerwoman," and Mrs. Morrell resumed her way with her head very high, and her whole manner showing as much pride as though she owned a city.

Helen dashed up the steps and rang the bell furiously, and when the door was opened she rushed to her mother's room.

Mrs. Blun was looking at the length and breadth of the China silk, the only thing she got any comfort from since the awful shock of Saturday.

The little girl with sobs told her story. She had told already of her terrible shame of Saturday, and had asked why Mrs. Morrell had been on her father's arm, but Mrs. Blun had been too hurt and mortified herself to do more than deliver her own very unflattering opinion of Helen's father: nor was she in much better humor now, and she said crossly:

"What can *I* do about it? If your father will walk with vulgar washerwomen on his arm, how can I help it? dear knows *I* have to bear enough from him."

Helen in her anger beat the floor with her hands.

"My father giving his arm to that feather bed," she said, "what will the girls say when I go back to school? Of course Lizzie knows it, and she'll be glad enough in her spite to tell it."

But Helen's troubles did not give Mrs. Blun a thought. She was again absorbed in the China silk, and wondering how she could get enough money to buy a lace *fichu* to wear with it; there would not be another opportunity to take the washerwoman's money—indeed there was little opportunity for tak-

ing any money, as Mr. Blun himself paid the wages of the servants and the bills of the house, and he gave to Mrs. Blun nothing more than an economical allowance for her own clothes and the clothes of the children. With regard to the clothes of the children Miss Luxor's good nature was a great help, and in this case Mrs. Blun meant to tax it as much as possible.

Mrs. Morrell having at length overcome her feelings about the "impudence of that one," meaning Helen,—began to wish as she carried her load in the heat of the mid-day sun, that Bartholomew could know how very good she was.

"There arn't many," she said to herself, "as would do such work in this killing weather, and all out of pure kindness," and if her husband could only find it out without being told by herself, she would not feel in the least displeased. To be sure, if she herself had not so stupidly motioned to Lizzie not to tell, before this time Bartholomew would have asked what it meant, and his wife would have told him. But in the first glow of her charity to Mrs. Tavish, she had thought not to let her "left hand know what her right hand did," and now she had to abide by Lizzie's scrupulous sense of honor, and her husband's stupid blindness. She little knew that her husband's blindness was only pretended because he thought she did not want him to see, or know what she was doing.

When she got home she bustled about her work a great deal so as to draw attention, and she let doors remain open in order that both her husband and Lizzie might see how hard she was working; but neither of them showed any curiosity. And when the end of the week came without a question being asked, or a word said, she felt vexed, and waiting only to have Lizzie depart for the studio, she took the big basket she was about to fill with the freshly ironed clothes of the Bluns and went into her hus-

band with it on her arm. He looked up from the paper he was reading and smiled, but not a word did he say, and then he looked down again. She rattled the basket but the noise did not disturb him.

Provoked, she called a little sharply :

“ Bartholomew ! ”

He looked up and answered gently.

“ What is it, Maria ? ”

“ I have a basket. ”

“ Yes, dear ; I see you have. ”

“ A new basket, Bartholomew. ”

“ So it looks, Maria. ”

“ A clothes basket, Bartholomew. ”

“ Yes, dear. ”

Mrs. Morrell was losing all patience.

“ Whose clothes do you think it's for, Bartholomew ? ”

“ I don't know, Maria ; I'm not a good hand at guessing. ”

The perspiration was steaming from her face, not so much in heat as in anger at his stupidity, and she put the basket down before him and wiped her face with her apron.

He still looked at her smiling, but he said nothing.

“ Bartholomew, ” she began again, “ do you suppose I've gone and bought a big basket like that for your clothes ? for the clothes of this family ? ”

“ I don't know, Maria, you know I aint given to calkilating on what a woman does. ”

“ Well, it seems to me, Bartholomew, that when a woman's been a brilin' the way I've been over wash tub and iron, you might have calkilated a little on what she was doing, and if you had, Bartholomew, you'd a found out that you have a wife as takes care of the poor, as doesn't let widows with abscesses and offsprings want when there's a chance of doing work for them, and getting the pay for that work they aint able to get for themselves. ”

But her husband only looked and smiled still.

"Aint you a going to ask, Bartholomew, what your wife's been doing? aint you a going to show any interest when she's been a sacrificin' of herself for the poor, and a doing washing and ironing for a whole family? aint you a going to say one thing Bartholomew, only sit there and look as if you were struck with the loss of speech? oh, that it's come to this"——working herself up to the feeling that this silence on the part of her husband was cruel——"that my own husband doesn't care what I'm doing or how I may be killing myself," and she covered her face with her apron.

Mr. Morrell was amazed. "Maria;" he said, getting up from his chair and placing his hand affectionately on her shoulder, "whatever have I done to make you go on this way!"

"It isn't what you've done," she answered, looking at him with one eye from the corner of her apron, "it's what you haven't done; why don't you ask me what I've been doing, and all the week when you saw me working so, why didn't you say *something*?"

"Oh," he answered, "is that the way you felt, Maria? and I thought I was pleasing you best by saying nothing. Of course I saw you engaged different from usual, but I know'd Maria, that whatever you were doing was all right, and that it would be unbecoming for me to be poking into you're matters, especially, when I know you're such a good woman, Maria. But now, since you're willing for me to know, tell me all about it."

Her anger fled at once, and making him take his seat, she took hers beside him, and told him all from her knocking against Thimig to the last amusing scene with Mr. Blun.

Bartholomew laughed heartily saying as soon as his laughter would let him speak:

"You're a wonderful woman, Maria." Then he added in a tone that made the words seem like a blessing: "You're a very good woman, Maria." Maria

was touched, and she said nothing for a moment. Then she asked :

“Didn’t Lizzie tell you how she saw me and Mr. Blun together on the street?”

“Not a word, Maria,” and then not being able to refrain from putting in a good word for his niece, he went on :

“That’s one thing about Lizzie ; you can depend on her for keeping a secret ; don’t you think so, Maria ?”

“Oh yes ; and I knew that, when I signed to her in the street not to tell.”

“And then, Maria, she’s like you in another matter ; she’s very good hearted—coming to me the way she did, willing to give up her drawing lessons so that I’d give her the money to send to Mrs. Tavish when she heard from Nanny that her mother hadn’t been paid by Mrs. Blun. Now, that was just like you, Maria.”

Mrs. Morrell was in a glow of pleasure and pride, and her husband seeing that went on :

“To think how you’ve been hiding all your good works. Now I suppose you told Nanny Tavish and her mother not to say a word of what you’ve been doing.”

“Of course I did. I didn’t want Lizzie to know that I was going there too, and I was that careful I got Orlander Thimig to promise he wouldn’t tell a thing about me.”

“And did he promise?” asked Mr. Morrell, with a twinkle in his eyes which his wife did not dream meant anything.

“Of course he did ; and he’d be afraid of his life not to keep his promise. Oh, I had no fear of Orlander telling on me.”

“Well, Maria, dear, after hearing all these wonderful things you’ve been telling, I feel as if I’d like to see this Mrs. Tavish and her little girl. Couldn’t you ask them to come here some evening next week ?

You say Mrs. Tavish will be well enough to do her work again on Monday, and we can make their coming a surprise to Lizzie—not letting her know one word till they're here.”

Mrs. Morrell was delighted with the idea; she liked Mrs. Tavish and Nanny very much, and nothing would please her better than to have them come to see her.

Mr. Morrell was pleased to have them come for two reasons; one because of his own wish to make their acquaintance, the other because their coming might be a better means of making clear to Lizzie why they had been so secret about Mrs. Morrell; better even than if he should tell her what his wife had said.

Mrs. Tavish hardly knew what to do when Mrs. Morrell invited her, she had so little time or wish to visit, but Mrs. Morrell seemed so disappointed and even hurt at the bare thought of a refusal, that Mrs. Tavish could not find it in her heart to say no. Then also, like Mr. Morrell, she thought such a visit might be the means of making Lizzie and Nanny warm friends again; Nanny was drooping and grieving over Lizzie's changed manner.

So she promised to go on the Friday evening coming, but not in time for tea; that however did not keep Mrs. Morrell from making up her mind to have abundant refreshments, and when she spoke to Bartholomew about it, he told her to get anything she wanted.

Early in the week she began to prepare, and having noticed how clean and neat Mrs. Tavish's room was, she resolved that her home should not be less so. Thus, a whole course of house cleaning was begun; the contents of every room were turned upside down, and kept so for three whole days, making Mr. Morrell very uncomfortable, but he only smiled and said it was human nature. It annoyed Lizzie, for often, just as she was very busy with her drawing she had to stop, and change her place, and move all her things,

but seeing how much Mrs. Morrell enjoyed the general upset, and how seldom she herself was asked to help, she said nothing. She wondered at it all but she never dreamed what it was done for. On Thursday, however, when she returned from the studio, and found new curtains on the windows of the best room, a bright new cover on the little centre table, and more than all a new cage for the parrot, she stood and stared in silent wonder at her uncle. Mrs. Morrell was scrubbing the kitchen floor and singing; they could hear her when she raised her voice, all the doors between Mr. Morrell's room and the kitchen being wide open.

Mr. Morrell tried to look as if he did not know anything more than usual; just smiling in his old way at Lizzie.

"What are they for?" Lizzie asked, "all these new things; tell me, Dad."

But Dad drew down the corners of his mouth in an amusing way, pursed up his eye-brows, and said with a solemn shake of his head.

"Maria's a very good woman, Lizzie. I always said she was. She may have been getting these things for our comfort."

"Not the cage for the parrot, Dad; she'd never do that, because that would be for *my* comfort as the parrot is mine, and she never liked the parrot."

"Yes; but Lizzie, Maria's been acting like an angel a good many days, now, and there's no telling what angel like feelings she may be having for you."

But Lizzie had not much belief in the "angel like feelings."

The next day she found Mrs. Morrell getting in a store of cake and confections, and lemons, and loaf sugar, and raspberry cordial, and caught her polishing with a brand new peice of chamios, some brand new tumblers, and glass fruit dishes, and she rushed in to her uncle.

"Mrs. Morrell's going to have a party, Dad; she's

got lots of things in the closet, and she's been buying new goblets."

"Has she?" said Dad very innocently, "well, don't you mind, Lizzie; don't ask her anything."

"Me, ask her anything," she said with so much anger, that Mr. Morrell's face fell. He had been fondly hoping that Lizzie's feelings were changing to his wife now, that his wife herself was different from what she used to be; but Lizzie's tone and manner convinced him that he had been mistaken.

Still, he could not let pass the opportunity for saying a good word for Maria.

"Don't you think, Lizzie, that Maria's proved herself a good woman lately? she's been showing great feeling for you, and if she has a little secret and it makes her happy neither you nor I ought to mind about it, dear."

"But I hate all these secrets," said Lizzie, feeling very sore about Nanny's secret, "why can't Mrs. Morrell do things openly? she hasn't anything to be afraid of"

"Make allowances for human nature, Lizzie; some people's given that way, and it aint best always to quarrel with the queer things of human nature. But, Maria's a good woman, Lizzie."

That evening after their early supper, and when the dishes had been washed and put away, and everything shone from the scouring and the polish of the late house cleaning, Lizzie was much astonished by hearing Mrs. Morrell tell her husband to put on his best clothes, and Lizzie to put on her Sunday dress; she herself was going to put on her yellow lawn.

Lizzie looked at her uncle; he fixed his mouth as if he were saying:

"It's human nature; but Maria's a good woman."

When they were all dressed and waiting. Mrs. Morrell gave them many starts by running to the door when she heard footsteps in the entry. It was not till she had three, or four disappointments that

a knock came at last, and Mrs. Morrell in a flutter of importance and delight opened the door.

“Mrs. Tavish!” said Lizzie in astonishment, when she saw who Mrs. Morrell was ushering in, and then catching a glimpse of Nanny, in the shadow of her mother’s skirts, she bounded forward with real delight and the two kissed each other with all their old affection.

Mrs. Morrell with an air of fond pride introduced her husband, and Mrs. Tavish thought she had never seen a homelier, but at the same time a kinder face. It was a face she trusted at once without knowing why, and she had a singular feeling that one day she would need to trust it.

Mr. Morrell was equally well pleased with Mrs. Tavish; he admired her neat, plain black dress much more than he did the sun flower dress of his wife. But his wife was very happy. She bustled from mother to daughter, and from daughter to mother, trying to make both very comfortable, and asking at the same time about Mrs. Tavish’s health, and telling in the same breath how much better Bartholomew was, and how glad she was they had come. But it all served to show how very welcome they were.

Lizzie brought Nanny to the parrot, and she tried to make the bird speak and show his tricks; but the parrot was sleeping, and the most Lizzie could get him to do was to rouse himself lazily for a minute and say :

“Polly’s gone to bed.”

Nanny laughed; she thought it very amusing. While they watched the parrot nodding to sleep again, Lizzie told how surprised she was at the visit of Nanny and her mother and then, Nanny, feeling that she was not expected to keep Mrs. Morrell’s kindness a secret any longer, told all about it; that brought from Lizzie all about how she had felt to Nanny, and the two little girls became as warm friends as ever.

"But how did Mrs. Morrell find out where we lived, or anything about us?" asked Nanny, still puzzled, "Mamma and I thought of course you told her, and now you say you didn't tell her a word."

"And I didn't," said Lizzie. She could give no other answer without telling who had sent the five dollar gold piece.

"Then, I'm bothered about another thing," said Nanny again, poking her fingers through the bars of the cage.

"When you thought it was so mean of me not to tell you Mrs. Morrell had been to see us, how did you know it? all the time she was making us keep it secret, she wasn't telling it herself, was she?"

"No, no;" said Lizzie quickly, "I heard of it by chance."

Just then Mrs. Morrell called Lizzie, and in a few minutes they both came from the kitchen, Mrs. Morrell carrying a large, well-filled tray, and Lizzie a big pitcher of lemonade. After that, the pleasant, kindly feelings of everybody seemed to increase, and Mr. Morrell could not refrain from saying that his wife was a good woman though he begged the company to excuse him for telling it in her presence, "But," he went on turning to Mrs. Tavish, "she's been such a good wife to me through my long sickness," at which Mrs. Morrell cried out that she had not been half good enough to him.

Then Mrs. Tavish in her quiet way, told of Mrs. Morrell's kindness to her, at which Bartholomew glowed in the face like a girl, rubbed his hands with delight, and whispered to Lizzie:

"I'm proud of Maria."

Lizzie however did not share in his pride about her aunt, nor could all the good things she heard of Mrs. Morrell weigh against that vulgar looking lawn dress,—bringing as it did thoughts of the unfortunate examination day—and Mrs. Morrell's unrefined

manners. Then Mrs. Morrell told in her amusing way all about the Bluns till even Lizzie laughed; she only stopped laughing when her aunt began to tell how she, Lizzie, had met her with Mr. Blun.

"But I shook my head at her," she went on, "and she never said a word about it, which does you great honor Lizzie," turning with a grand patronizing air to the little girl, "it shows you have gumption, and a very proper and discreet mind of your own."

Lizzie wanted to make a face expressive of her disgust at such praise, but her uncle's hand was pressing one of hers.

Mrs. Morrell went on :

"It's queer how things come about; now the first time I went to your house, Mrs. Tavish, it was all through Orlander Thimig."

"Maria!" her husband said in a tone that warned his wife to say no more: he was afraid the feelings of his guests would be hurt, while Lizzie in her fright lest her aunt should disclose the secret of the five dollar gold piece, got up so quickly from her chair that it fell over, and all this put Mrs. Morrell into a great flurry, and made the guests wonder.

Mrs. Morrell to hide her flurry said to Lizzie :

"You shouldn't have taken that chair, Lizzie; it was always ricketty on its hind legs; get another one."

And Lizzie got another one making all the noise she could to drown her aunt's voice.

But her aunt went on, saying to her husband and raising her voice above Lizzie's.

"Were you going to ask me anything Bartholomew, about Orlander?"

By saying that Mrs. Morrell thought to cover up any blunder she had made.

"Yes, no;" Bartholomew answered, quite puzzled by this sudden turning of Thimig upon him, and Lizzie was so angry she put the chair she had brought down with a thump that made everybody start. A happy thought came to Mr. Morrell.

Don't you think Maria, the company would like to see some of Lizzie's drawings ?"

Maria said at once :

"To be sure they would. Lizzie get them."

At another time Lizzie would have shrunk from showing her work, but now she was not sorry for the means it afforded to get Mrs. Morrell's mind away from Thimig ; and while she was gone Mrs. Morrell told all about the wonderful good luck in the art gallery. She was in the midst of her account when Lizzie returned with the sketches.

Mrs. Tavish knew too little about art to be a judge of the drawings but she thought they were wonderful for a child of Lizzie's age, and she praised them warmly. Nanny felt a little throb of envy— what were all her rhymes and stories compared to such work as this ? then looking into Lizzie's blushing, happy face she felt ashamed of herself, and to make up for it she threw her arms round Lizzie's neck, and said :

"Your drawings are beautiful ; in school you know you always beat all the other girls.

"Tell them about the gentleman who paid you for your picture," said Mrs. Morrell.

Lizzie did so, Mrs. Tavish saying at the close of the account :

And you do not even know his name ?"

"No ; I did not hear it once."

If Lizzie could have told his name how different would have been Mrs. Tavish's feelings.

Mrs. Morrell served more refreshments ; Mr. Morrell told an amusing story of his boyhood, and Lizzie recited a little piece that she had learned when she went to the primary school ; then Mrs. Tavish asked Nanny to repeat some of the rhymes she had composed herself, but Nanny shrunk from repeating any of them, and when at length she yielded to the urging she did so with a very red face, and a very much abashed manner. Mrs. Morrell said they were wonderful,

and Mr. Morrell said it was very feeling the way Nanny brought heart to rhyme with part, and rose with nose, while Lizzie asked Nanny to write them for her sometime, and Mrs. Tavish was both proud and delighted. But the little rhymester herself never felt so dissatisfied ; she thought her verses did not sound well at all when she said them out like that.

Mrs. Tavish got up to go home ; but Mrs. Morrell would show her every room first—she had not done so much house-cleaning for her visitors to go no further than the best room. Lizzie's room was the last exhibited ; there was no table upside down, nor easel made out of an old clothes horse. Everything was neat and orderly, and Nanny looking at it thought how happy she must be to have a whole room to herself. Mrs. Tavish was thinking of the one poor little apartment in which she and her child lived ; but then she *had* her child and what would a palace be were she deprived of her.

Thus, the evening, a rare one to Mrs. Tavish, came to a close, and hosts and guests parted with warm feelings on both sides, and cordial invitations from Mr. and Mrs. Morrell to come soon again.

Mr. Morrell snatched an opportunity to say quietly to Lizzie :

“ Its all right now, aint it between you and Nanny ? ”

“ Yes, Dad ; it's all right. ”

“ I knew it would be, Lizzie, when you and she'd come together, here, and that's why I didn't let on who Maria was preparin' for ; but you don't mind now, that I didn't tell you ? ” saying the last words with a look of affection that went to the child's heart.

“ No, Dad ; I love you so much that I don't mind anything you do. ”

Nanny said to her mother as they walked home.

“ I wish we had a whole floor like the Morrells, Mamma. ”

“ I wish we had, dear, ” Mrs. Tavish said.

CHAPTER XXXI.

IN the early days of October the Ingoldsbys moved into their fine city house. Egbert paid all the bills to the great satisfaction of his step-father and Edwin, and as he did not seem to mind how much money he spent they were all the more pleased. What they did not quite like was his always speaking of the house as his; they did not know what queer things he might do in his own house; still they hoped for the best, and when they saw how lavish and elegant everything was, they tried to put away their fears. They did wish he would give a party, and that it would be in keeping with the splendor of the place; they even ventured to hint that they expected something of the sort, but Egbert only smiled. Cornelia was very happy; whether Egbert gave a party or not, did not trouble her, so long as she was let alone—not forced to hear the complaints and bear the scolding of her father and brother. She did wonder a little when they had been nearly two weeks in the new house, that Egbert had said nothing of the Bluns; she thought perhaps he had changed his mind about keeping up an acquaintance with them and she was rather sorry, for if so she would have no means of hearing of Nanny Tavish. But Egbert was only taking his time to carry out a little plan he had formed, and at the end of the two weeks, coming upon his sister one day in one of the parlors, he pointed to a space on the wall between two fine paintings; and said:

"I shall have that little drawing of Lizzie Morrell's hung there."

Miss Ingoldsby having seen the drawing, said in dismay :

"Egbert : you surely would not have that crude thing placed between those masterpieces?"

"Why not? the painters of those masterpieces may have done just such crude work at first ; at all events I shall have it so, for I am going to have her here, the week after next. Your father and brother have dropped several hints that it would be the proper thing for me to give a party—a society party, I suppose ; and I have made up my mind to give one ; one of *my* parties, as this is *my* house I can give any kind of a party I choose, but the invitations can go forth in the name of Ingoldsby ; that will gratify our blue-blooded relatives. At this party I am going to have this little Lizzie Morrell, Mr. and Mrs. Blun, their daughter, Helen, and that Miss Luxor you said you were so pleased with. Those will be *my* friends. You, of course, can invite any one you wish to, and I shall let father and Edwin invite a few of their friends. We don't want the party too large. Twenty-five, or thirty people will be enough."

Cornelia beginning to feel very weak about the knees, sat down. Her brother went on.

"We won't invite the very little folks this time, keeping that pleasure for a few weeks later : and this party will be the means of getting Lizzie Morrell to know that poor little Helen Blun—it will do her good to know Lizzie ; and the party will also gratify Mrs. Blun. She wanted so much to be invited to one, so as to see society."

If Egbert had not looked so grave, Cornelia surely would have thought he was joking ; but he never seemed more serious, and she said :

"Am I to invite grown up people to meet these two children?"

He stroked his mustache before he said :

"Invite a nalf dozen mothers that you know, mothers of little daughters—I don't want any boys—and the daughters must be not much older, nor younger than our two little friends."

"Then it will be a child's party," said Cornelia, hardly knowing whether to be vexed, or amused.

"No ; it will not ; eight little girls with three times that number of grown people can hardly be called a child's party ; but even if it should be, cannot a child's party be a pleasant thing for grown people ?"

Cornelia smiled, then she said :

"When will you give this queer party?"

"Let me see ; to day is Tuesday ; this day two weeks, and we shall have it in the afternoon from four o'clock till eight—that will send the children home in good time."

"Egbert !" said his sister, "What will society say of us if you go against every one of its customs like that ?"

Egbert said coolly :

"As it is not society that is giving this party, I don't see that society need trouble us."

"But you are going to give it in our name," she said, "and father and Edwin will be frantic."

"Well, if they should get too frantic we can buy a couple of straight jackets for them, and have them taken care of as insane people for a little while."

Cornelia thought it better to say no more, and Egbert went on in the same tone :

"You write plain, simple little notes of invitation to *my* friends, Cornelia, and I shall call and give them myself. You and your father and Edwin can invite your friends, according to the way society sends out invitations."

Cornelia bit her lip. She knew Egbert was not pleased with her for having mentioned society.

When old Mr. Ingoldsby was told about the party, he raved for an hour to Cornelia about the disgrace it would be to his "blue blood." He would not have

cared so much were it given in Nevin's name ; for then he could put it all down to the oddities of his step son ; but to have it said that the Ingoldsbys gave such a party was maddening, and only that he knew he owed everything just now to Egbert, he would have spoken his mind freely. Edwin was not less angry ; he said his step-brother ought to invite the maimed, and the halt, and the blind, but it was only to Cornelia he spoke.

Cornelia had to go to Egbert again to find out more of what kind of a party he wanted.

"Is there to be dancing ?" she said, "or are the people to come here only to talk to each other take some refreshments, and then go home ?"

"Let me see," he said, making a turn of the room, and looking as if he were thinking very gravely about it ; the truth was, he was not thinking at all only to make the whole thing utterly different from the way society would have done it, and as ridiculous as possible.

"Cornelia," he said, when he came back to her, "I think we shall have a little old-fashioned music, that the children can dance to, and sing to—they must positively sing, and you grown up people can join in the chorus. Then we might have a few children's games—Blind Man's Buff ; Sally Waters——"

Cornelia burst out laughing : the thought of her pompous father, and her proud brother, making part of a ring round

"Little Sally Waters sitting in the sun,

was too much for her, but Egbert without even smiling, went on, "or some other game that children like. Games sometimes are a good means to get people to know and like each other. Then for refreshments, we shall have a sensible, palatable supper, followed by light confectionery that will not make the little ones sick."

Cornelia wondered what he meant by light confectionery, but she thought she had better not ask ; she said however :

“ You spoke of old-fashioned music ; will you hire some one who plays the banjo or the fiddle ? ”

“ No ; you and some of your friends can play old fashioned tunes on the piano—old fashioned dance music for the children ; simple, popular airs that they can hum to, if they should not know the words ”

Cornelia was again in dismay ; what would her society friends think of a party where they were expected to play the piano for the amusement of children.

Egbert, thinking by this time he had made it all very plain, left the room whistling.

Cornelia felt for a moment like crying : then she roused herself and laughed. It was surely going to be the strangest kind of a party. What would her father and Edwin say when they heard of the game, and which of their friends would they invite ? That brought the thought of which of her own friends she should ask. Mothers with little daughters ; Egbert had said ; she only knew fashionable mothers with fashionable little daughters, and she smiled as she thought how horrified they would be if they knew they were invited to meet the family of a tailor, and a child from a tenement house.

“ But they won't know it,” said Cornelia to herself, “ unless Mr. Blun tells it by some ridiculous remark, or Mrs. Blun shows it by her want of breeding, and if they do, perhaps there will be some way of letting the injured ones know it is one of Egbert's whims. Thank Providence he has riches enough to cover all his oddities.”

So she put down on her list the names of the fashionable mothers, but she thought she had better not add any more, till she knew how many persons her father and brother would ask. When she went to Edwin, he said a naughty word, but he kept it so much between his teeth she did not catch it ; then he said so she did hear :

"Why doesn't Egbert hire a hurdy gurdy and a monkey. We could dance to the music of that, and we could make a ring with the monkey for "Sally Waters."

He did not even smile, nor did Cornelia smile, and he went on:

"We shall be the talk of society giving such a party as that for the first in this elegant house. I'd like to straight jacket Egbert."

"Perhaps, later," said Cornelia, "Egbert will let us give one of *our* parties."

"Not a bit of it," said Edwin savagely.

"He'll do this kind of thing all the time."

"I am to write the invitations for his friends," said his sister.

"You can write them for mine too," said Edwin, "I'll tell you what to say:

"Mr. and Miss Ingoldsby request the company of Mr. and Mrs. Blank to an afternoon gathering of old maids, old bachelors, and children; entertainment to consist of piano thumping and the singing of popular negro songs. Refreshments will be served to the hungry, but all will please abstain from tasting the confectionery lest they should be taken ill on the premises."

Cornelia laughed: then she said,

"Whom will you invite?"

He took a card and wrote the names of a half dozen ladies and as many gentlemen; but as he gave it to her, he said coarsely:

"If it were not," and then checked himself.

"If it were not what?" asked his sister.

He turned on her angrily.

"It strikes me, Cornelia, that you ask too many questions. Am I bound to explain to you every word that drops from my lips?"

Cornelia might have asked if she were bound to consider all his wishes, but she did not have the courage. Instead, she went out of the room very much cast down.

If Edwin had not been dependent on Egbert for future money favors, he would have gone out of town and remained till after the party.

Later that day, Cornelia went to her father, choosing the time just before dinner so that he would not have much chance for showing his temper. But the old gentleman was in an angry mood. He had just seen the little crude drawing on the parlor wall, and having been told by one of the servants it had been hung there by Mr. Nevin's order, he did not dare to touch it. He accused Cornelia of being the cause of all the trouble; if she acted with Egbert as she ought to do, since he thought so much of her, Egbert would do things that would please him and Edwin. Cornelia tried to make her father see that it was not her fault, but he only got more angry, and at length she burst out crying.

That frightened the old gentleman. In her grief she might tell Egbert: so he said quickly:

"What a baby you are, Cornelia. Can't your old father say a few words just to relieve himself without having you take them up so?"

She dried her eyes.

"And now what do you want?" speaking in a kinder tone.

She showed him her list of names for the party.

He wanted to burst into another fit of rage, but it was the dinner hour and there would not be time. "Leave the list with me, and I'll think up the people I want to invite."

"Oh, pa! can't you give me the names now?" She did not want to come to him again about the party.

He took out his heavy gold pencil and wrote as many names as Edwin had written.

"That is my contribution to this horrid business," he said, and then growling, he stamped into another room.

CHAPTER XXXII.

MR. NEVIN went to Mr. Blun's store to give the invitation to the party into Mr. Blun's own hand, and when Mr. Blun read that it was to take place in the afternoon, and that it was not going to be at all a society party, he laughed to himself at the thought of what his wife would say.

His wife did say a good deal when that evening her husband gave her the note to read, and more still when she found that Miss Luxor was invited; but her husband, having the wicked satisfaction of knowing she was disappointed, did not mind what she said. He took care to tell Miss Luxor in his wife's presence that she was also invited.

"I," said the little woman almost aghast, "why I haven't been at a party in twenty years. Thank these kind people for me and beg them to excuse me."

"I shall do nothing of the kind, Aunt Rebecca," said Mr. Blun. "I have accepted the invitation for you and you are coming with us. It is going to be a simple, afternoon affair so that your dress need not be very different from the one you have on." The one she had on was the same fig leaved gown that had amused Miss Ingoldsby.

His speech about dress made his wife wonder how she was going to look in her China silk if everybody else was going to wear a plain dress, and how angry her husband would be when he saw her costume.

"Please do excuse me," went on Miss Luxor in real dismay.

But her nephew would take no excuse.

When Helen heard of it, she was delighted. She danced about when she was alone with her brothers and sisters and talked so boastfully of her invitation that it roused Susie's envy and made Lulu cry "tause she touldn't doe to a party," and set Walter and Arden to saying how glad they were they had not been invited.

Miss Luxor had to be called in before quiet could be restored.

When Mr. Nevin left Mr. Blun, he went to Margaret's fruit stand. She had not seen him since the June days and she flushed with pleasure.

"And excuse me," she said, "for telling it to your face, but you're looking happier and younger than when you were here before."

"I have given myself something to do, Margaret; perhaps that's the secret; I have been interesting myself in little girls, and I have found the one I met here, one day. Have you seen her since?"

"Not once sir; and it isn't that I haven't been on the lookout for her, but I think she had a sort of shame somehow, after what happened, to come here any more."

"Perhaps, but I have found her, and she is going to make a clever woman, Margaret."

"I don't doubt it, sir, with her eyes and her wonderful independent way."

"Margaret!"

"Well sir?" looking at him with wonder at the manner in which he called her name.

"Wouldn't you like to take your old situation with us again? your sister for whom you gave it up, is dead, and your present way of living is not easy."

"Oh, Mr. Nevin! how good it is of you, but I am too old—there is no work about this—"

He would not let her finish.

"There shall not be much work about your situation in *my* house, for it is *my* house, Margaret. You shall see that others do their work; that is all, and you shall have your old wages."

She clasped her bony, wrinkled hands together and looked at him, tears of thankfulness coming into her eyes but she did not speak.

"Will you come?" he asked gently.

"I'll do anything in this world for you, Mr. Nevin, but *they* never cared for me; they were glad when I went."

"It is *my* house now, and I need some one there who will be faithful to my interests—all the servants now are strangers."

"I'll go," she said.

From Margaret's stand Mr. Nevin went to Lizzie Morrell's home. He had not seen the little girl since the day he met her in the art rooms, but he had gone to Bromley's studio when she was not there, and he had heard from Bromley gratifying accounts of her progress.

The October day had reached its gloaming, and the lamps in the hallways of the tenement house not yet being lit, he was able to get to Mr. Morrell's rooms without being seen by any of the other tenants.

Mr. Morrell was still unable to do more than get about the room with the help of a cane, nor could his doctor tell him when he might venture to the street; but he was as patient and hopeful as ever; so long as Maria and Lizzie were spared to him, and were as amiable to each other as they had been lately, he would not murmur. He felt somehow, as if the peaceful state of his family were due to his wife's acquaintance with Mrs. Tavish; it surely began when that acquaintance began, and he knew that Maria went to see Mrs. Tavish very often, and that she always came back very happy and very gentle. Then Lizzie and Nanny were such affec-

tionate friends, that altogether, Bartholomew felt he had a good deal to be thankful for.

On this evening with no thought of the stranger at his door, he was sitting quite alone, Lizzie having gone to the drug store, and Maria not yet having returned from her afternoon jaunt. Enough daylight remained to show plainly Mr. Morrell's white, rugged face leaning against the dark cushion of the chair, and indistinctly, the furniture of the room.

He started at the unexpected knock, but said in a loud voice.

"Come in," and Mr. Nevin entered closing the door gently behind him.

"I am looking for Mr. Morrell," he said in his deep, pleasant voice.

"That is my name, sir," said Bartholomew rising and looking with great astonishment at the stranger.

"Are you the uncle of a little girl named Lizzie Morrell?"

"I am, sir."

"She has told you no doubt of meeting some one in a picture gallery who was much pleased with her drawing, and who bought her little sketch?"

"She has, indeed; and are you that gentleman, sir?" said Morrell forgetting in his delight at the meeting to seize his crutch as he took a step forward; but he was quickly reminded of his neglect by a twinge of pain, and he had to take the crutch before he spoke again.

"It was stupid of me not to think it might be you, sir. Sit down please. Lizzie will be in soon, and I'm expecting my wife every moment."

His simple, kind, childlike manner charmed Nevin.

"You are an invalid, Mr. Morrell; I see," he said pulling a chair forward and seating himself.

"I am sir; but I have great hopes of getting quite well, only that it's tedious."

Egbert did not care to say any more for the pres-

ent about Mr. Morrell's illness ; he desired to get at once to what he came for.

"I am much pleased with your little niece, Mr. Morrell."

Bartholomew's face glowed, and his voice trembled a little as he said :

"I'm very much obliged to you, sir ; she's the only child of a dead brother of mine, and for that reason she's like the apple of my eye."

"I desire," said Nevin, "to have her attend a little party at my house, next week Thursday. My sister will preside, and it is to be in the afternoon. Mrs. Morrell of course will come with her."

Bartholomew did not know what reply to make ; the suddenness of the invitation bewildered him. He thought that he ought to feel glad and honored at having received it, but then he could not tell how Maria would take it, nor how Lizzie would relish the idea of Mrs. Morrell going with her.

As it was getting too dark even to see each other's faces, he thought he would defer giving an answer till he got a light ; that would give him a little time to think, and perhaps also, by that time his wife would have come back, so he said ; "Excuse me sir, and I'll get the lamp."

He hobbled out to the kitchen where he knew the lamps and matches were kept, but not knowing the precise spot, it took him some time to find them, and while he was looking, Mrs. Morrell returned, and entered the room where she had left her husband quietly sitting when she went out.

The last trace of daylight having faded, she could not discern anything in the room, but never doubting for a moment that her husband was in his usual place, and that he was the only occupant beside herself, she began :

"You're all in the dark, Bartholomew dear ; Lizzie didn't get back yet I suppose. Well, I wouldn't have been so long, but I stopped to speak to Orlan-

der. He seems to have a great fear of me someway, and I thought I'd talk to him about Lizzie. I told him about her pictures and the elegant gentleman that bought her sketch—."

The elegant gentleman recovering from his amused astonishment, thought it was time to give some sign of his presence ; so he said :

"I think you mistake me for Mr. Morrell."

At which speech and which voice so very different from Bartholomew's, Mrs. Morrell screamed, and just then her husband came in with the lamp.

"I am afraid I have frightened you," said Nevin with a smile.

Mrs. Morrell wore her light calico dress, and it rustled like silk being starched so stiff, while on her frowsy hair was the very small bonnet with the yellow strings.

"I'm so glad you've come, Maria," said her husband, "this is the gentleman that was so kind to Lizzie, and he wants you to take her to a party at his house, next week," telling it all at once so that his wife would reply to the invitation.

But Mrs. Morrell, to use her own words, "was so flustered," at having mistaken that elegant man for Bartholomew, that all the reply she could make was to say in jerks :

"Oh,—oh !—oh my !—the very idea—I'm sure—" till her husband feeling something must be done to restore her to herself, said :

"Maria, the gentleman's waiting for you to say something to him."

Nevin also came to the rescue, saying pleasantly :

"I have been hardly fair to you, Mr. Morrell, expecting you to accept an invitation for your wife and niece when you do not know anything about me. I belong to the Ingoldsby family ; they live in——" giving the street and number.

"It is all down here," he went on, placing the note of invitation in Mrs. Morrell's hand.

Mrs. Morrell had recovered herself enough to think it would be good manners for her to courtesy, and courtesy she did, bobbing so low, that Nevin wondered if she were going on her knees.

"You will come, will you not?" said Nevin, "you and your niece?"

"Indeed, I shall, Mr. Ingoldsby," said Mrs. Morrell, thinking that must be his name since he said he belonged to the family of the Ingoldsbys. Nevin did not correct her.

"I wish Lizzie was in," said Mr. Morrell, feeling that if Lizzie were there, somehow she would make up for anything not quite polite that his wife had done. But Lizzie did not come though Nevin waited long enough to have Mr. Morrell tell much of his family history, and when he did go, Mrs. Morrell accompanied him to the street door; her directions to mind his steps, and to look out for the turns were spoken very often and in a very loud voice, but to her great disappointment without bringing out a single neighbor, for October evenings were not warm enough to have open doors, and the hour being the busy one of supper, nobody so much as looked through a chink.

She even waited on the threshold of the street door after he had gone, looking up and down with the hope of seeing some one to tell of the way she had been honored.

When Lizzie came back and heard the news she could eat no supper; her first feeling was a sort of dismay that the gentleman had seen Mrs. Morrell—she was sure he was disgusted: and to think of Mrs. Morrell going to such a party; it made her almost sick.

"Well, Lizzie Morrell, if you're not the contrariest girl," said her aunt, provoked after she herself had shown so much interest and delight, that Lizzie should not say a word.

"Here's an invitation for you," she went on, "that

anybody in this whole city 'd be glad to get, and you don't as much as ask what you'll wear."

"I don't care," said Lizzie almost ready to cry, "I don't want to go."

And she rushed to her own room not able to bear the reproachful way Dad looked at her. She wished she had not spoken so, but she couldn't help it, she said to herself, thinking of the many ways Mrs. Morrell had shamed her in the past.

Mrs. Morrell looked as if she were going to get into one of her old tempers; she put her hands on her sides and shook her head at her husband:

"There's for you, Bartholomew Mortimer Morrell,—to say she doesn't want to go when an elegant gentleman like that comes here to ask us. But she's a going, she's a going, I say, she's a going," beginning to work herself into a state of great excitement.

"Yes, yes, Maria; she'll go," said Bartholomew quickly. "It's only that she's too tired now, to talk about it; but we'll talk about it for her, and you'll get her dress and your own. You must have a new dress, Maria, and I'm glad now I wasn't well enough to go into business this fall, for then I shouldn't have had a cent to spare; but now, I have, and you must get nice dresses, Maria. Come, sit down, and we'll talk about it."

Mrs. Morrell's anger was appeased at once, and she seated herself saying very amiably:

"I think, Bartholomew, I'd like a pink silk dress."

"For you?" he asked with a sort of dismayed surprise in his voice. Little as he knew about a woman's dress, and least of all a woman's dress for a party, he felt as if a pink silk would not do for such a big woman, and one who was a good deal over forty.

"Yes, for me; I've seen pink silk in the store windows for evening dresses and it would be very becoming."

A good thought came to her husband.

“Supposing Maria, you ask Mrs. Tavish about it ; don’t you remember how she told us she used to be a dressmaker before she came to New York. Now, she will just know what’ll be nicest for you.”

Mrs. Morrell thought so too ; perhaps what helped her to think so was the excuse it would give her to go to see Mrs. Tavish the very next day. She did want so much to talk about Mr. Ingoldsby.

Lizzie stole to her uncle when he was alone, and she whispered why she had spoken so crossly, and asked him to forgive her. He forgave her at once and comforted her, but at the same time he tried to say a good word for his wife.

“To be sure, Lizzie, when Maria found who it was she was a talking to, taking him for me, it bothered her some ; but on the whole, she behaved very well, for Maria’s a good woman.”

But the chief comfort he gave her was when he told her Maria was going to ask Mrs. Tavish whether she ought to wear a pink silk. A pink silk on Mrs. Morrell ! to the sensitive child what night-mare could equal that ?

CHAPTER XXXIII.

WHEN our three little girls went back to school in September they were promoted into Miss Robson's class. Miss Robson still kept her anger against Miss Olden, holding her head very high when she met that young lady, and often complaining of the shocking bad scholarship of Miss Olden's girls.

For her part, Miss Robson declared, she didn't know how Miss Olden could promote girls so entirely unfit to be promoted, and she never lost a chance of telling the girls themselves how she pitied them for the poor way in which they had been taught in the last class; and all of that being told to Miss Olden by some of the girls, Miss Olden foolishly made herself very miserable.

The girls, however, young as they were, were not long in finding out that Miss Robson taught them in a way to give the least work and trouble to herself; but then, she had the supreme virtue which Miss Olden had not; she could keep ramrod order. Every member of Miss Robson's class sat up rigidly during a lesson with eyes steadily turned to a given point, and head not moving the least bit, but of what the little active minds were thinking, Heaven alone knew for Miss Robson did not.

In Miss Olden's class the hard, conscientious work of the teacher often interested the small minds and kept them on the subject, so that though heads might not be so still and little forms might not be so erect, nor so motionless, the children knew what

they were doing, and most of them could give intelligent answers.

In the present class, Miss Robson took just the words of the text books ; if the child did not understand them, the books were to blame, not she. Being so perfect a disciplinarian that the order of her class was praised by both Principal and school officers, she could afford not to care much about her methods of teaching.

In such a class Lizzie Morrell had abundant time for thinking about her drawing, and without knowing it herself she had marks of great favor in Miss Robson's eyes. Having been the most troublesome girl in her last class, Miss Robson had made up her mind to find no fault with her in the present one, so Lizzie, to her agreeable surprise found she could let her mind go as far from the class room as she chose, and going four afternoons a week to the studio, where her work was so pleasant, her thoughts naturally preferred Bromley's class room to Miss Robson's.

To Nanny Tavish, who wanted to understand what she studied, Miss Robson's method of teaching was very disappointing ; she found herself asking questions in her own mind which Miss Olden would have answered even before Nanny could have asked them, but she knew Miss Robson would think her troublesome if she asked her ; so she used to keep them for her mother : but Mrs. Tavish did not have education enough to be able to answer them always, and at length, she said :

“Do ask your teacher, Nanny ; why are you so much afraid of her ? you used to ask Miss Olden ; try Miss Robson. Perhaps you will find her very kind about it.”

Nanny did so, and Miss Robson looked at her ; a long, cool look that sent the blood up to the child's forehead ; then Miss Robson deigned to say :

“What foolish questions you do ask, Nanny Tavish.”

The very day that Nanny had been promoted Miss Robson had made up her mind to put Nanny down whenever Nanny should attempt to show her intelligence, for Miss Olden having praised the child as *her* very best scholar, it was necessary to show that Miss Olden's judgment was wrong; that what she had taken for cleverness was forwardness and needed to be put down.

And it was put down; Miss Robson was never again asked a question of any kind by Nanny Tavish, but Nanny told her mother with tears of anger. Her mother, poor woman, could give her no other comfort than to say it would be different probably in the next class; the teacher might be more like Miss Olden.

To Helen Blun, Miss Robson's way of teaching made no difference. She could sit still, twirling her thumbs behind her back, or say to herself on the buttons of her apron as far as she could reach them:

“ Rich man, poor man, beggar man, thief,
Soldier, merchant, Indian Chief.”

That was to tell what kind of a husband she should get when she grew up, and as she had a good memory it was not much trouble to study the words of her lessons, as she did not try to think what the words meant, she had no questions to bother the teacher with.

Different from what Helen had expected, Lizzie did not say a word about Helen's father having Mrs. Morrell on his arm, and as everybody in the class knew what warm friends Lizzie and Nanny were, Helen was very careful to say nothing that could hurt Nanny's feelings. But Helen and Lizzie disliked each other; they disliked each other all the more that each had her own set of friends in the class; Helen having those who wished to be friends with a little girl who lived in a fine house and who had a rich father, and Lizzie,

those who did not like Helen's airs, and who did like Lizzie Morrell's courage. Nanny was perhaps, the only little girl in the class that everybody felt kindly towards, even though she was such a warm friend of Lizzie Morrell. The two hardly ever spoke of Helen. Lizzie thought if she should say just what she wanted to about Helen, Nanny would say it was not right to speak so, and Nanny thought that Lizzie was not to blame if she did think Helen was hateful, but that it would be against all her mother's teachings to say so.

This was how it was in Miss Robson's class on the October morning when Lizzie Morrell went to school full of the visit of Mr. Ingoldsby. And when she was hanging up her things she heard one of Helen Blun's friends say to another:

"Helen Blun's going to a party week after next; she told the girls the minute she got to school."

Then Miss Robson clapped her hands and each girl took her place, looking down to see that she toed the line, and looking up to fix her eyes on the point Miss Robson's white plump finger pointed to.

Lizzie thought it very odd that Helen should be going to a party too at about the same time, and when she glanced at Helen she could not help thinking how pretty and how happy she looked. Then she looked longingly at Nanny Tavish, and she wondered how she could ever wait till recess to talk to her.

Nanny that morning, while looking over her lessons instead of taking part in the buzz about her, had also heard that Helen was going to a party; she had heard Helen herself say so, and tell where the party was to be, and that Miss Ingoldsby and her brother were going to give it. Having met Miss Ingoldsby at the door of Helen's house, Nanny felt sure it was the same Miss Ingoldsby, and it did not make her feelings to that lady any more kindly. She said to herself:

“Helen Blun’s rich: of course, Miss Ingoldsby would ask *her* to a party, and be kind to her, and not hurt her feelings. I am only a washerwoman’s daughter.”

When recess came and she saw Helen in the midst of her friends each one impatient to hear more about the party, Nanny felt more bitterly than ever, and she walked quickly to a distant corner of the yard. In a moment, Lizzie found her, and when *her* wonderful news was told Nanny’s bitterness was lost for the time in astonishment.

That the name of the gentleman Lizzie had met in the art gallery should be Ingoldsby, and that he should actually call at Lizzie’s home to invite her to a party at his house on the same street and at the same number that she had heard Helen mention that morning, made it plain to Nanny that he was one of the same family of Ingoldsbys her mother used to work for. Lizzie’s elegant stranger must be Miss Ingoldsby’s brother, but Lizzie’s description of him was not like Mr. Edwin Ingoldsby; it must be Egbert then—the Egbert she once thought so much about; she did not want to think about him any more—his very name since it was also Ingoldsby, sounded hateful to her. With all these thoughts hot in her mind, she only looked at Lizzie without speaking.

Lizzie, puzzled at Nanny’s silence said at length: “What’s the matter, Nanny? I never saw you look like that before.”

Nanny drew a long breath.

“It is all so strange, Lizzie,” she said, “and the strangest part of all is that Helen Blun is going to that party too.”

Lizzie turned pale, Helen going to a party where the “feather bed tied in the middle,” was going, this was too dreadful.

“I heard her telling the girls this morning,” went on Nanny, and it’s the same place, and they’re the same people.”

It was Lizzie's turn to stare in silence, and Nanny, her bitter feelings all coming back, felt impelled to tell everything.

"Don't you remember?" she said, "the lady who spoke to me in front of Helen's house the day you helped me to carry the clothes basket?"

"Yes," said Lizzie.

"Well, that lady is Miss Ingoldsby; you didn't ask anything about her, and I didn't feel like telling you, but I'll tell it all to you now."

And she did tell it all, feeling with every word she spoke she was not doing right, for, beside speaking unkindly of the Ingoldsbys she was causing Lizzie to think ill of people who were kind to her; but it was a relief to Nanny to tell it, she had felt so unhappy to think that Helen who put on such airs, and was so boastful, should have received such an invitation from the Ingoldsbys while she, Nanny, was entirely neglected by them. She did not mind a bit that Lizzie was invited; she loved Lizzie too well, and now, when she saw the distress in Lizzie's face, she was sorry that she had spoken.

"It was real mean of me to tell you," she said, "for now, maybe you won't care for Miss Ingoldsby and her brother, and all through me."

"I don't like them," said Lizzie quickly, but immediately she felt that was wrong, and she added:

"Except Mr. Ingoldsby; I mean the Mr. Ingoldsby I saw; it wouldn't be right for me not to like him, and maybe he isn't like his sister; maybe he's a heap better."

"I guess he is," replied Nanny, glad to be able to say something to make up for her former speech, "and I'm real glad you're going."

"Well, I'm not glad," said Lizzie shortly, "with Helen Blun going too, and Mrs. Morrell—it just makes me sick," and she leaned wearily against the school yard fence.

Nanny did not know what comfort to give, for

with Mrs. Morrell going it was bad enough to make anybody sick.

Lizzie roused herself to say :

"I don't know what I should have done if Dad hadn't thought of asking her to get your mother to tell her what to wear. And she will try to keep her from getting a pink silk, won't she Nanny?" sudden dismay coming into her voice.

"I am sure she will, Lizzie, and what are you going to wear?" trying to make herself feel an interest in her little friend's dress.

But Lizzie did not care much what she wore ; all her thoughts were about Mrs. Morrell, and she said, kicking at the loose flagging of the yard with the toe of her shoe.

"I don't know, and I don't care, but I just wish there never was such a thing as a party in the world." and she kicked the loose flagging so hard this time she winced ; but without minding the pain, she went on :

"I am not going to let Helen Blun or any of the girls know that *I* am going to a party."

"No, I wouldn't," said Nanny quickly, and won't she be surprised when she sees you there. I do hope Mrs. Morrell will get a real nice dress for you," her eyes sparkling as she thought of Helen's vexation at finding that a little girl who lived in a tenement house was also invited to the same party. But poor Lizzie only felt that no nice dress of her own could hide Mrs. Morrell's vulgarity, or make up for the shame her aunt might cause her to feel.

In the morning of that same day Mrs. Morrell called on Mrs. Tavish, to tell her wonderful news, and to ask her about the dress for the party.

"A black silk, Mrs. Morrell, will be the nicest thing for you," she said, "as you are so large it will make you look smaller ; black always does that."

"Does it now? well, I was thinking of a pink silk cut low in the neck with white lace sleeves. You see

my neck is plump and I have a good fair skin."

Mrs. Tavish wiped her mouth very hard with her apron till she could restrain her laughter ; then she said :

" Just because your skin is fair black will be most becoming, and as this party is to be in the afternoon your dress should not be cut low by any means."

" Why, I thought low necked dresses were the style at all parties," said Mrs. Morrell beginning to look disappointed.

" Only evening parties," answered Mrs. Tavish.

" Oh, is that it? well, of course, I am not in the way of such things and I don't know much about them, only I want to be sure to look as nice as the rest of the company, and Bartholomew is very anxious about my appearance."

" Then a rich black silk, high in the neck, with a little good trimming will be the best."

" Well, I'll get that then," said Mrs. Morrell, but she said it in a hesitating way as if she were not at all sure about it.

" What is Lizzie going to wear?" asked Mrs. Tavish.

" I was thinking of yeller with red ribbon bows," said the visitor, and she looked very much surprised that Mrs. Tavish instead of agreeing with her should say quickly ;

" Oh, no ; that would never do for a little girl ; you must get a simple white dress."

" White, for Lizzie ? why her skin is only two shades better than a nigger's."

Mrs. Tavish smiled.

" No matter how dark her complexion is," she said, " white will be the proper dress, but then it can be made bright with red ribbon if you like."

" Well," said Mrs. Morrell, speaking very slowly and seriously again, " as I said before I don't know much about these things, and I told Bartholomew I'd do what you said."

But for all that, she was in a good deal of doubt even when she went to buy the material for the two dresses ; it was such a change from pink to black, and yellow to white, and she could not help thinking how becoming to herself would have been a pink silk cut low in the neck and flowing with lace sleeves.

Mrs. Tavish did not resume her work immediately on Mrs. Morrell's departure ; she wanted to think a little about " Mr. Ingoldsby." After all there were more Ingoldsby families in the world than the one that gave her so much anxiety, and why should he not belong to one of those other Ingoldsbys ? From Mrs. Morrell's description, " a tall, elegant man with big, lovely eyes and hair like satin," she could not get much, and she could not trust herself to ask more about him.

But, when Nanny came home she made it plain that Mrs. Morrell's " elegant gentleman," *was* a member of *the* Ingoldsby family, and that he must be even that member whose name was Egbert. Nanny on ending her story, said with flashing eyes :

" I am just as good as Helen Blun. I am in the same class with her at school ; you are just as good as her mother is, but just because you are a washer-woman, I suppose. Miss Ingoldsby didn't think anything about hurting my feelings, not noticing me, after pretending she liked me so much. Because Helen Blun's father is rich she invites her to a party ; she doesn't invite me : we are only good enough to send money to, as if we were beggars."

Mrs. Tavish, white even to the lips, managed to say :

" Lizzie Morrell is not rich and she has been invited."

" Not by Miss Ingoldsby," flashed back the angry child, " it was Mr. Ingoldsby who asked her. Oh, mamma ! it seems as if riches bring everything. Helen Blun can be as hateful as she likes in the class,

and she'll have lots of girls to care for her just because her father's got money."

Mrs. Tavish turned her face away lest the working of her features might betray how thankful she was that Nanny had not been invited to that party. Her silence and her averted head brought repentance to Nanny, and when kissing her mother she found a tear on her cheek, all her jealous, angry feelings went at once.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

ON the day before that of the party Helen Blun proudly told Miss Robson she was going to be absent.

"What for?" asked Miss Robson, in the tone that always made timid children tremble down to their shoes. But Helen did not tremble at all; she felt she had might on her side this time, her mother having said it was necessary for her to remain home all day. So she said fearlessly, and with an air of triumph:

"I am going to a party."

"A party?" repeated the teacher in a very severe tone, "is it necessary for you to stay home a whole day to go to a party?"

"Yes ma'am," replied Helen more triumphantly still, "it is going to be in the afternoon, and I have got to dress for it."

Miss Robson looked very fixedly at Helen for a moment, then she said:

"You require a whole day I suppose on the principle of less brains more dress. Be careful, Helen, to do it very well; dress so much, that nobody will dream how little you know."

The girls laughed, and Helen covered with shame sank into her seat. Even Nanny found it in her heart to be glad the teacher had spoken so, for Helen had boasted so much during the week of the party and what she was going to wear.

Lizzie's black eyes sparkled with delight, and put-

ting her open book up to her mouth, she chuckled into it in such an amusing manner that it set the girls about her to laughing heartily. And Miss Robson actually let them laugh.

How glad Lizzie felt that no one in the class but Nanny, knew *she* was going to a party, and half a day from school was all she was going to take ; nor did she intend to tell Miss Robson till the first recess on the morrow.

When she did tell, adding that she was going to a party so as to save the teacher the trouble of asking the question, the teacher said with much surprise :

“ *You* going to a party too ? is it the same party Helen Blun is going to ? ”

“ Yes ma’am,” said Lizzie to the astonishment of the girls who were spending the recess in the class room, and then to Lizzie’s astonishment, Miss Robson said :

“ You deserve to go to a party, Lizzie, when you are so sensible as not to take a whole day for it, but then you have brains, and so do not require so much dress.”

All of which was treasured by the girls who were listening, in order to be told to Helen.

Mrs. Blun did need Helen at home the whole day of the party, but it was without Mr. Blun’s knowledge, and Helen having grown nearly as clever as her mother in deception managed in such a way that when he went to his business that morning, he did not dream that his daughter was to remain at home.

And Mrs. Blun had managed to get her *fichu* without her husband’s knowledge, and she was going to have her hair dressed without asking his consent. Mr. Blun had given money to buy a party dress for Helen, but he said his wife had already so many handsome dresses, it would be against his discipline to buy her another. And if it had not been

for Miss Luxor, Mrs. Blun would not have had her *fichu*, for that obliging little woman got and made Helen's dress in such a way that while it was very pretty, it left enough money for the coveted lace.

That was without Mr. Blun's knowledge, however, nor did he know anything about the China silk till the day of the party. Then his wife burst upon him in such a blaze of blue glory, and with her hair so curled and puffed, that he started.

"Mrs. Blun!" he said as if he were not sure it was she. "Mr. Blun!" she replied, making a mock courtesy, and tossing her very much dressed head.

"When,—where did you get such a dress?" he asked.

"I bought it with the money you gave me to pay the washerwoman's bill, last summer. Don't you remember when you went to her house and paid it yourself? You know I must do something, Blun dear, when you are so stingy."

Mr. Blun could not think immediately what to say, and before he could think, the parlor door opened and Helen and Miss Luxor came in.

Miss Luxor said in her cheerful voice,

"How do you like us?" and she put Helen forward till she stood directly in front of her father.

Whatever the little woman's taste was about her own dress, she had made Helen's very prettily. Even Helen herself was delighted with it, and her looks pleased her father so much, he forgot a little what he wanted to say to his wife.

Helen's hair had grown a full inch or more, and it was so curly it lay in golden rings all over her head; her forehead was very white, her cheeks a lovely pink, and the rest of her features were very pretty. It seemed if she had on anything else than that pure white simple dress she would not have looked half so well.

Miss Luxor wore what had been her best dress for the past fifteen years; to be sure it had not been

worn much during that time, and it was always carefully wrapped in the half of a pure linen sheet, and put away in the little old-fashioned iron-bound box. It was a pea green watered silk, somewhat dull in color and lustre, but without a spot, or rent. A white net handkerchief took the place of the waist above the shoulders, and the sleeves below the elbow were deep ruffles of white lace. It was plain in the skirt but very full and long, making Miss Luxor look taller than she generally did.

Fifteen years before it was probably, a handsome and suitable dress, but now it looked very old-fashioned indeed, so old-fashioned that it gave Mrs. Blun a shock, and she said with a start :

“Good Heavens !”

But what she said did not seem to startle anybody, Mr. Blun thought Aunt Rebecca’s dress was not half so out of place as his wife’s was, and Helen was too full of her own good looks to care much about it.

Aunt Rebecca had another advantage in Mr. Blun’s eyes, the arrangement of her hair ; there was not a strand’s difference between it now and the way he always saw it, even to the little pieces that straggled out from her topknot ; they were all sticking out in the usual manner, while his wife’s elaborately dressed head made him feel as if he were getting a fever.

Possibly at the party Miss Luxor’s small size would save her from much notice, but just now, looking from her to the tall, buxom figure in light blue silk and white lace, she was an odd and amusing sight. Between the two the fair little girl in white looked lovelier than ever.

As it was against Mr. Blun’s discipline to hire a carriage, his wife covered her party finery with a long cloak, and Helen’s dress with a shawl, while Miss Luxor put on a cape.

Then they set forth, Mr. Blun in grim silence giving an arm to each lady, and making a motion to Helen to walk before them.

CHAPTER XXXV.

MRS. MORREL'S appearance when she was dressed for the party showed the good taste of Mrs. Tavish. In the rich, well fitting black silk the large figure seemed to have lost much of its clumsy size, and she looked so different and so well, that her husband could not find words enough to express his delight ; and his fond praise took away the last regret she had for the pink silk.

Lizzie thinking much more about Mrs. Morrell's appearance than her own, was also well satisfied, and could she have been sure that Mrs. Morrell would have very little to say at the party, she would have been quite happy.

Lizzie's dress was the simple white one advised by Mrs. Tavish, with the addition of a handsome cherry colored sash with knotted ends, and bows of the same color tying the ends of her two long thick braids of hair. In front her hair was combed back from her forehead as she always wore it. Dad said he liked it best that way when his wife spoke of curling it, and Lizzie liked it better too.

To be sure, as Mrs. Morrell remarked, Lizzie's dark skin was not at all improved by the white dress, but then, there was some truth in what her husband whispered to her ; that Lizzie's eyes made up for her skin ; he'd be bound there wouldn't be such another pair of eyes in the whole party. And when he kissed the child, hardly daring to touch her with his hands lest he should disarrange her dress, he said with a voice that trembled slightly :

"You needn't be afraid, Lizzie; you'll look as pretty as any of 'em."

Everybody in the tenement knew that Mrs. Morrell and her niece were going to a party at a very grand house; they knew also the hour when the two would start, Mrs. Morrell having told them, so they all should be ready to look at her. And she was not disappointed; women and children had gathered in the hallways, and on the landings, that marked the turn in the stairs, and they would have gone into Mrs. Morrell's very rooms if they had not been afraid of Mr. Morrell.

Mrs. Morrell having arrived at the first little knot of sight seers stopped and took off her white crepe shawl so as to let them look upon her splendor. Lizzie got angry, and when Mrs. Morrell told her to take off her sacque, she said hotly:

"I am not going to show myself nere, and I'll wait on the street till you get through showing yourself."

With the last word she darted down the stairs.

"What an impident child," said one of the women, who was angry that her curiosity had not been satisfied with regard to Lizzie's dress.

"If she was mine," said another, speaking from the same cause, "I'd take the impidence out of her."

Mrs. Morrell was also angry, but just now her vanity was stronger than her rage, and she said as she turned proudly around:

"It's her uncle that's spoiled her; he doesn't think nothing of giving her her own way in everything."

And then she forgot Lizzie, for everybody was admiring her; and as she continued her way through the house, she was still more gratified, for she caught a glimpse of Mrs. Tappan peeping through a crevice in her door. Mrs. Morrell felt sure that Mrs. Tappan had heard all the fine things which were said of her (Mrs. Morrell's) looks, and as she was so pleased she quite forgot that Lizzie had made her angry.

Lizzie on reaching the street had seen Thimig in the doorway of the coffin shop, and there she went, not unwilling to show him the beauties of the dress she would not let the women in the house see.

“My, hi, Lizzie!” he said, twisting his hands in his hair, “you’re like one of them flyin’ angels wots painted on the church winder; only they aint got such eyes; your eyes is a shinin’ like a pair of shoot-in’ stars.”

Lizzie laughed; and put on her sacque; then she went to the doorway.

“I am going to stand here, Oleander, so Mrs. Morrell will see me.”

Not knowing how many women and children might come down to the sidewalk with Mrs. Morrell, Lizzie thought it better to stay at a distance. To her disgust and annoyance, she had to wait a full quarter of an hour before Mrs. Morrell came forth, and then she was surrounded not only by those who had admired her within the house, but by others who were waiting to admire her without, and as soon as they saw her, they all went towards her. Lizzie darted into the street without even waiting to say good bye to Thimig, and she went on in the direction she knew they must take, without once looking back.

But Mrs. Morrell was not going to give up any of her pleasure; it was not every day she had such a chance for showing herself, and now it should never be said that “Orlander” did not have a look at her party dress. Perhaps, even Mr. Brush himself was in the shop, and it would not be acting fairly by him not to let him see it.

So before “Orlander” she stopped, not caring how much ahead Lizzie was, and she took off her shawl: but the boy, instead of being overcome by admiration, seemed to lose all his little wits, for he began to go backward into the shop, putting up his hand in a frightened way and saying:

“Don’t yer, Mrs. Morrell; now don’t yer.”

"I aint going to, Orlander," she said ; having no idea of what it was he did not want her to do, but feeling she must assure him she was not going to.

"Well then, don't yer," he said again, going backward still, and thinking with a sort of despair that even Brush was not there to protect him, though what it was he was afraid of he could not tell, only that Mrs. Morrell, having taken off her shawl, and having the crowd about her, scared him.

"Orlander," she called, going after him, and the crowd going after her.

"It's black silk that's coming. Don't be afraid."

"Orlander," had backed into an empty ice box turning a sort of somersault that put his feet instead of his face before the astonished crowd. A roar of laughter followed, Mrs. Morrell laughing also, and it got louder as Thimig trying to get up only floundered about more ridiculously, till one of the women went to help him, Mrs. Morrell kept away lest she might soil her dress.

"Oh, Lor!" said Thimig when at length he found his feet instead of his head upon the ground.

"I told yer not to, but yer would," he meant that for Mrs. Morrell, but she, beginning to think that she *was* spending too much time, had turned about and was leaving the shop.

Lizzie was nowhere in sight, but Mrs. Morrell was sure she should see her for the child would not dare to go without her. So, throwing her shawl again about her shoulders, she bade a general "good bye," and actually ran to overtake Lizzie ; the sight of her running was almost as amusing as Thimig's fall into the ice tub. Lizzie, angry and ashamed was standing on the corner of the next street, and when she saw the big, panting figure, she made up her mind she would not say a word ; it would only make matters worse to speak, so, when her aunt reached her, she turned in silence to go on. Mrs. Morrell could not speak till she got back her breath, and somehow,

when she did get it back she seemed to be somewhat afraid to say anything. Perhaps it was Lizzie's silence that puzzled her, or a feeling that she herself had been acting very foolishly, that made her afraid to speak.

The Ingoldsby mansion was very large, standing almost alone in the middle of a block. On one side was a carriage house fine enough Mrs. Morrell afterward said, for a rich family to live in, and on the other side a beautifully laid out garden. The steps leading to the front door were very broad and grand. A dozen carriages stood in front of the house. All this was too much for Mrs. Morrell to behold in silence. She caught hold of Lizzie's shoulder and said in a sort of wild whisper :

"Oh, Lizzie ! isn't it fine ? and all the quality. Look at the carriages ! how will we go in ?"

"Through the door, of course," said Lizzie shortly. She had noticed how elegant the house was also, but it only made her feel all the more what dreadful things Mrs. Morrell might do.

Mrs. Morrell was thinking if her neighbors could only see all this. She courtesied to the man who opened the door. he looked so fine and grand, and then doing what Bartholomew told her to do, she gave him the note of invitation.

The man took the note just as if he had been told to take it, but for all that, he asked the name.

Mrs. Bartholomew Mortimer Morrell, at your service," said Mrs. Morrell, and she would have courtesied again only Lizzie pulled her : Lizzie thought the man was making fun of them, and she frowned at him ; when he asked, pointing to her :

"What is the name of the little Miss ?"

"Elizabeth Morrell," said her aunt ; she felt that Lizzie would never do for an occasion of this kind.

"She's Bartholomew Mortimer's niece, so she's a Morrell, and Bartholomew Mortimer, he's my husband."

The cheeks of Bartholomew's niece were as red as

her sash, and her big black eyes were flashing under her frowning brows; the man at once looked very solemn, and he said politely!

"Follow me, please!"

They followed him through a wide marble hall, and up stairs with such soft carpets on them Mrs. Morrell said they were like down beds, and into a room that seemed to be all blue satin and gold.

Mrs. Morrell, so far from wanting to speak, felt almost as if she were afraid to breathe. She put her foot down as if she were trying not to crush something, and she kept a tight hold of Lizzie, as if she didn't know but there might be some spell on her, for the like of this grandeur she had never seen before. But she began to breathe freely again, and to loosen her hold of Lizzie, when she saw standing in the middle of the blue room an elderly woman dressed very plainly, and looking as if she belonged to the same class as Mrs. Morrell. She was smiling as if she knew them; Lizzie in her astonishment, broke quite away from her aunt, saying:

"Aren't you the woman that gave me some breakfast one morning?"

"I am dear, the very same, and I know all about you; this is your aunt, Mrs. Morrell, isn't it? How do you do, Mrs. Morrell? I am very glad to know you."

Mrs. Morrell never having been told about Lizzie's breakfast at the apple stand, was very much puzzled; but at the same time it was a great pleasure to meet some one who seemed like herself, and when the strange woman held out her hand, Mrs. Morrell took it and shook it warmly.

"My name is Margaret Anthon the stranger went on, and I used to live in this family before I kept a stand, and now I'm back here again; and Mr. Nevin had me come up here so as to make you two feel at home. No one else is to come into this room but you two; you are to use it as your dressing room, and when you are ready, some one will come to bring you to the parlors."

"Mr. Nevin," said Mrs. Morrell, "you mean Mr. Ingoldsby."

"No ;" said Margaret smiling, and then she told how his name came to be Nevin.

"Oh !" said Mrs. Morrell, and even Lizzie said "oh," too, thinking what Nanny Tavish would say when she told her.

And all this time, Mrs. Morrell was so taken up with what she heard, she did not even begin to unpin her shawl, till Margaret said :

"Let me help you both to take off your things for some one will come for you soon."

In the excitement of seeing that her dress was just as it ought to be, and her hair as she had arranged it before she left home, and that Lizzie's dress was in order, Mrs. Morrell forgot to ask about the breakfast at the apple stand, till Margaret chanced to speak of it again, then she said to Lizzie :

"I never heard about that."

Lizzie blushed and said quickly :

"You know the day I was away from home so long."

Mrs. Morrell nodded.

"Well, that was the time," and then she told how the woman asked her to have some coffee and bread.

"But the day you came back to pay for the breakfast, the day Mr. Nevin saw you first, and it was that made him like you so much, the spirit you showed in doing that."

"She brings that from the Morrells," said Mrs. Morrell proudly, "not to speak of the training she's always had from me."

"I don't doubt it," said Margaret, "for you have every look of being a fine, spirited woman."

That pleased Mrs. Morrell so much she did not mind a bit not having been told before about the "breakfast," nor did she even care to ask how Lizzie got the money to pay for it. Just at this point a servant came to know if Mrs. and Miss Morrell were ready to go to the parlor.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

No one who went to that strange party ever forgot it; the guests seemed to belong to such different classes of people ; there were very grand looking, haughty ladies and gentlemen, and very pleasant looking cordial ladies and gentlemen ; there were stiff solemn looking old unmarried gentlemen, and straight, severe looking old unmarried ladies ; there were grave, prim young ladies, and pretty, lively young ladies ; there were richly dressed, proud mothers with richly dressed, proud little daughters, and there were rich, pompous fathers, and rich fathers who were not so pompous. But everybody seemed to feel that many of the other bodies should not have been invited ; and really it seemed to be the queerest party that ever was given. Egbert was so delighted with it, he was laughing to himself all the time.

His step-father and brother were furious ; he could see that though they did not dare to say a word, and they had to smile and say pleasant things when their hearts were filled with rage ; and they had to hear from some of the guests sneering remarks not meant for them to hear. Nevin himself heard some of the remarks but he only smiled the more. It was just what he wanted ; “ society ” was showing what it was.

Cornelia did her best to make everybody feel happy, though she was anything but happy herself, knowing how her father and brother felt, and

thinking of how "society" would talk the next day. She was dressed very simply in pure white, and her dress instead of fitting closely to her figure fell about her in soft folds, and was confined loosely at the waist by a blue girdle.

There were four parlors, two on each side of the hall.

The furniture had been Egbert's choosing, and while it was very elegant it was not at all like the parlors of society people ; but as everything cost a great deal, society people could say nothing. Another of his whims was to have the parlors on this afternoon, lighted by wax candles ; he thought that would please the children. Then there were stands of natural flowers everywhere, and the lights, and the fragrance, and the rooms with their very high ceilings, gave some of the society people in spite of their airs, a good deal of longing and envy.

Mrs. Blun felt her heart beat very quickly : this surely was going to give her what she had been wanting for so many years, a place in society : but when she saw the cold way in which she was received, and heard a haughty looking lady say :

"Who *are* these Bluns ? they cannot be in society, or I should have heard of them before." her hopes were considerably dashed.

Mr. Blun was thinking how undisciplined most of the people were, who were there, but Helen and Miss Luxor were enjoying it to their heart's content.

The purse proud bodies received a severe shock when they saw Nevin enter with Mrs. Morrell on his arm, and holding Lizzie by the hand.

Mrs. Morrell courtesied when she was introduced, and when Nevin said :

"This is Mr. Ingoldsby, my step-father, Mrs. Morrell," she replied, sinking almost to the floor :

"Your servant, sir ; I'm glad to see you."

Those of the company who were natural enough to see the humor of it all, found it very hard to keep

from laughing, and all the more that Mr. Ingoldsby looked as if he were about to have a fit.

"Is it me, Maria Morrell, that's here, or isn't it me?" the gratified woman kept asking herself.

To Lizzie, the scene was like fairy land, and her wonder and delight kept her at first from thinking much about her aunt ; and very soon Nevin put her in charge of Cornelia. Cornelia did not remember she had ever seen Lizzie before, but she thought as she looked at the bright little face and beautiful eyes, that it was no wonder Egbert felt an interest in her.

Nevin went on with Mrs. Morrell to the Bluns, and when she saw Mr. and Mrs. Blun she was so surprised, she could, as she said herself "have been knocked down with a feather." Mrs. Blun knew Mrs. Morrell at once ; but she did not make this fact known ; not so with her husband ; the change in Mrs. Morrell's dress puzzled him, and he said in a very friendly tone to the horror of his wife :

"Have I not seen you somewhere, before, Mrs. Morrell?"

"Indeed you have, Mr. Blun ; don't you remember the day you walked with me on one of you arms, and your wife on the other?"

Mr. Blun did remember it, and it was part of his discipline to show that he was not ashamed to remember it ; he even introduced her to Aunt Rebecca—Helen was in another parlor with the little girls now, and Nevin feeling that he could leave Mrs. Morrell with Mr. Blun for a little while, went to see how Cornelia was getting on with the children.

They were all in the parlor where Lizzie's drawing hung, and when Lizzie saw that, it made her forget her bad feelings of Helen Blun. Helen could hardly believe her eyes when she saw Lizzie Morrell ; she could not understand it, and in her surprise and anger she did not recognize her. Miss Ingoldsby, not dreaming they had ever met before, introduced them to each other, and neither Helen nor Lizzie

showed that they had ever seen each other before.

As Lizzie looked at her drawing, it was in a neat, pretty frame, she thought :

“If only Dad could see it.”

Miss Ingoldsby watching her, saw the color rise in her cheeks, and she thought there were tears in the big black eyes.

“Do you know that little drawing?” she asked softly.

Lizzie smiled, but she could not speak ; if she had, she would have burst into the happiest tears she had ever shed.

The mammas of the other little girls found their way into the parlor just as Miss Ingoldsby thinking to do Lizzie a kindness and an honor, brought the children to look at the drawing.

“My brother bought it,” she said, “and he had it hung here ; it was done by this little girl,” placing her hand on Lizzie’s shoulder.

Lizzie had not expected anything like this, and she did not want it. She shrank back, her face covered with blushes. Had Mr. Nevin been there she felt she would not have to bear this. Cornelia saw she had made a mistake, but it was too late to help it now, and one of the mammas said :

“It is very crude to be hung there.”

A second remarked :

“It is quite a foil to the pictures on each side of it.”

A third mamma said :

“Do you suppose the child will ever learn to draw well ?”

The others said nothing, but they looked in such a scornful way that it made Lizzie shiver. Helen Blun whose surprise at hearing it was Lizzie’s drawing had given place to envy, began to feel better since it was thought so little of after all. Lizzie would like to have wrenched the sketch from the wall and torn it to ribbons.

Cornelia was in great distress and she was angry

as well, and the first chance she had, she told it all to Egbert. He only smiled, but his sister knew his smile meant a great deal.

After a little, there was music ; then there were children's dances followed by children's games. Egbert managed all, and everybody had to take part.

When it was time to go to supper Egbert wickedly contrived to have his step-father give his arm to Mrs. Morrell, Edwin take Miss Luxor, while he himself, led the way with Mrs. Blun ; and he led it through the parlor where Lizzie's little drawing hung. He stopped before the drawing, and drew the attention of all the company ; then he told how he had got the sketch and why he had placed it there, but without giving Lizzie's name, and he asked everybody to notice how well it was done, and how it showed that the little girl who did it, would after a while be able to do very fine work indeed.

"Why, that's my Lizzie, he's talking about," said Mrs. Morrell in a burst of delighted surprise to those about her. Lizzie did not hear her aunt, being too far down the line, but she had heard everything Mr. Nevin said, he had spoken so loud, and she kept her eyes down not daring to look up. How thankful she was he did not tell her name ; if only Miss Ingoldsby had not told it.

The ladies who had spoken so sneeringly of the little drawing before, felt obliged to smile now, for Egbert was looking in such a very pointed way from one to the other of them.

Helen's envy of Lizzie all came back, and she felt as if there were no more pleasure in the party. Mrs. Blun never dreaming who Mr. Nevin was talking about, listened, not caring much what he said, till she heard Mrs. Morrell's speech ; that gave her a shock—the little black eyed niece of that vulgar woman praised like that before all the company was almost more than she could bear.

Never in her whole life had Mrs. Morrell been so

proud or so happy : she had felt just a little bit shy leaning on Mr. Ingoldsby's arm, and trying to think what she should say to make him talk ; he was so grimly silent ; but this praise of Lizzie from Mr. Nevin placed her quite at her ease.

" You see Mr. Ingoldsby, that my Lizzie's a wonderful child," she remarked. " Bartholomew Mortimer, that's my husband, found it out quick'rn I did, but I know it now for certain. What's the matter ? Got a crick in your knee ?"

The angry old gentleman had drawn back from her so quickly she was sure he must have a pain of some kind. But he did not speak. Those who heard her were laughing to themselves.

Egbert resumed the way to the supper room, and old Mr. Ingoldsby trusted that his ignorant companion would not speak any more. But she clutched his arm as if it were a sledge hammer, and said again :

" If that was a crick in any of your jints, Mr. Ingoldsby, you ought to be careful, for that was just the way my Bartholomew Mortimer got his rheumatism first ; a simple crick in his knee, but he didn't pay any attention to it, and he got that bad, he had to sit in red flannel all day, with nobody to talk to a good deal of the time but a parrot. Now Mr. Ingoldsby dear, take warning by my Bartholomew Mortimer, and don't let it come to red flannel with you."

There were a good many strange sounds by them, and Mr. Ingoldsby was so furious his face got more purple than red. Only for what he already owed to his step-son, but more still what he hoped to get from him, he would have told this abominable woman what he thought of her.

At table it was worse. Mrs. Morrell did not think for a minute she was acting out of the way ; in fact, she thought the more at home she made herself the more respect the company would have for her, and when she heard them laugh, for at length nobody

could help it, she did not dream they were laughing at her.

At table, Mrs. Blun was seated on the other side of old Mr. Ingoldsby, and opposite were Edwin and Miss Luxor. The little girls had a table to themselves in another part of the room. Mr. Blun having acted as escort for one of the mammas, found his seat quite away from his wife and Mrs. Morrell.

Egbert took charge of the children and he made so much amusement for them, that Helen forgot her envy, and Lizzie actually forgot Mrs. Morrell. But those who were seated near Mrs. Morrell could not forget her; she said too many dreadful things. She praised the elegant furniture, she supposed the decorations of the table had cost a mint of money, and she even asked Mr. Ingoldsby the name of something that had been put on her plate. He told her very shortly, and she said she must get some of it for Bartholomew, now that his rheumatism was better, and the doctor let him eat something besides dry toast and tomatoes.

Cornelia felt sorry for her father; he looked as if he might burst a blood vessel, and the way that he sometimes turned and glared at Mrs. Morrell, made his daughter shiver. It did not affect the vulgar woman herself, however, because she did not see him; she was looking at the good things on her plate even while she was talking.

Edwin seeing and hearing all, was as angry as his father was, but he hid his feelings, and he talked to Miss Luxor,—he had found that the odd looking little woman could talk very well indeed—as if he neither saw nor heard what was going on opposite.

Mrs. Blun was delighted. It seemed to make up for all the past to have Mrs. Morrell show how dreadfully ill bred and vulgar she was; but her delight was not to last.

Mrs. Morrell having filled herself with the good things, looked at Mr. Ingoldsby's plate, and seeing

that he had taken nothing—he could not because rage was choking him—she said very affectionately:

“You’re not eating, Mr. Ingoldsby dear. That’s a bad sign when your appetite goes at the same time a crick in your knee comes.”

Mr. Ingoldsby told the waiter to remove his plate, and Mrs. Blun laughed. Mrs. Morrell heard her, and thinking she had laughed to show that she did not believe about the bones and the loss of appetite, she said, raising her voice a note higher:

“Indeed, it’s so; and if you don’t believe me, you can ask Mrs. Tavish. She had rheumatism in the West, and that’s the very way it came; she told me so.”

Edwin Ingoldsby stopped so short in what he was saying to Miss Luxor, that the little lady looked up at him in surprise; Cornelia turned as white as her dress and glanced over at Egbert; but he was too far away to have heard anything: if only he had heard she thought.

Old Mr. Ingoldsby got up from his chair; then, he seemed to think of himself, and he dropped into it again; but so heavily, Mrs. Morrell begged him to be careful.

“For,” she went on, “if you have rheumatism in your bones, you can’t afford to use ’em that way, or they’ll be gettin’ cricketty before you know it.”

Mrs. Blun was trembling lest this dreadful woman should come out with the whole story of the visit to Mrs. Tavish. Instead of laughing any more, she only looked scared and white, and she wished with all her heart the party was over. She had enough of society.

But she was saved any further shame. Edwin began to talk across the table to Mrs. Morrell. It was dreadful to have to do it, but he must get her away from the subject of Mrs. Tavish before Egbert should hear her. So he went on speaking about things that

he thought she might know, much to the surprise of his father and his guests.

At length the queer party was over; before nine o'clock the Ingoldsby family was left to itself.

The old gentleman felt he must say something, and Edwin that he must protest, and they both turned upon Egbert the full force of their anger, forgetting for the moment the presence of Cornelia; she sat tired and limp in a corner.

Mr. Ingoldsby began :

“Well, sir, are you satisfied with the insult you have put upon your family, by bringing that ignorant, vulgar woman here ?”

Edwin added :

“You have made us the laughing stock of society : I should not be surprised to see an account of it in some of the papers. And what good has it done ? has it given pleasure to anybody except that horrible Mrs. Morrell ? She certainly had the honors of the evening.”

Egbert answered his step-father first :

“Am I satisfied, sir, you ask ; I am more than satisfied : I am avenged.”

He turned to Edwin.

“I have made you a laughing stock for society ? Then you ought to give up such society. Come Cornelia.”

He crossed to his sister, and gave her his arm ; they left the room together.

Mrs. Morrell was perhaps the happiest of all who had been at the party, and Lizzie was hardly less happy. She had neither seen nor heard the dreadful things her aunt had done, and the thoughts of where her little drawing was hung, and what Mr. Nevin had said about it, gave her so much delight she thought they never would get home to tell Dad.

And what Dad had not known to take place in his whole life before, they both kissed him together, and talked to him at the same time.

"It beat all that ever you heard tell of," said his wife.

"And if you could only have seen it, Dad," said Lizzie.

"They had flowers in the parlors as high as this ceiling," said his wife.

"It was hung between two beautiful paintings," said Lizzie.

"And the wax lights, and the silver and glass ware on the table, would take the sight out of your eyes," said Mrs. Morrell.

"And he told all the company about it," said Lizzie.

"And young Mr. Ingoldsby stopped talking to the lady he took to supper, to talk to me," said Mrs. Morrell.

"And he was so kind, I just love him in my heart," Lizzie went on, meaning Mr. Nevin, but her uncle was so puzzled by the way they were both talking to him, that he didn't know whom she meant. Mrs. Morrell resumed :

"And the old man himself, old Mr. Ingoldsby ; oh, Bartholomew, dear, he paid me such attention, it was a sight to see him."

"Oh, but Mr. Nevin," said Lizzie, "*he* was so kind."

"Who is Mr. Nevin ?" asked her uncle.

"Oh, we forgot," said Lizzie and Mrs. Morrell together, "his name isn't Ingoldsby," and then they went on talking together, till he had to say :

"Maria dear ; Lizzie dear ; go it one at a time, or I'll never have a clear idea of what you're saying."

"Well, you talk then," said Lizzie to Mrs. Morrell, "and I'll talk after."

And Mrs. Morrell did talk, telling about the Blun's and wishing Mrs. Tavish had been there, so that Mrs. Blun could have met her two washer-women, and she did not even forget Margaret Anthon ; then she told about the supper but she so mixed her account of that with the names of the guests

she was introduced to, that when she got through, Bartholomew was not sure but "Patty de foygwa," as Mrs. Morrell pronounced it—she meant "*Pate foi de gras*," was the name of a guest—some foreigner he thought,—and Miss Perdigrew something that would be good for him to eat.

Then Lizzie had to talk, and at length when midnight struck, Mr. Morrell said :

"Whenever are you two going to bed ? and you," pinching Lizzie's cheek, "will want to go to school to-morrow to hear what that little Blun girl will have to say ; won't you ?"

"I don't care," said Lizzie, "but I don't think she'll dare to say a great deal."

"She's like her mother," broke in Mrs. Morrell, "and you served her right, Lizzie."

Bartholomew said gently.

"It was just her human nature, Maria, and she's only a child. Don't you be too hard on her, to-morrow, Lizzie : seeing as you had so much honor at the party, it'll be easy for you to treat her well."

"Oh, I won't say anything to her," said Lizzie, "I'll just let her say all she wants to about me."

Helen Blun came back from the party cross, disappointed, and full of envy. She was looked down upon by the six little girls because her dress was so much cheaper than theirs ; no one had seemed to notice her pretty face, and that horrid Lizzie Morrell had been set above everybody else by Mr. Nevin ; then, there was the next day at school to dread, when the girls would ask her all sorts of questions, and what should she say, knowing that Lizzie Morrell would be there to tell whether she were speaking truly, or not ? She felt almost as wretched as she had felt about the shaker bonnet and going home from the party on the way to the omnibus, she was so full of her unhappy feelings she did not seem to know where she was walking. She struck her toes against the curb of the gutters, she stumbled over

loose flags in the sidewalk, and she slipped in the strangest way, till at length, just as her father had hailed an omnibus, she fell flat into a muddy gutter. That of course, stopped them all, and it gave Mrs. Blun a chance to say sharply :

“This comes of being too stingy to hire a carriage. Get up Helen !” shaking the child ; it made her feel better to shake somebody—“the ruin of your dress is more than the carriage hire.”

“It was not because I was too stingy, Mrs. Blun,” said her husband, “but because it was against my principles.”

Aunt Rebecca gently touched his elbow.

“Don’t say anything more to-night,” she whispered. He actually turned from his wife to Helen without saying another word.

Helen’s shawl had become unfastened in her fall, so there was nothing to keep her white dress from the muddy gutter, and when she got up, with her tears, and the dirt and disorder of her dress, she was a sad sight.

But Aunt Rebecca was at her side, whispering :

“Don’t cry, Helen ! I’ll clean your dress.”

The impatient driver of the omnibus called out :

“Are you people going to take this ere ’bus, or do you calkilate on keeping a poor man here with his horses all night?”

Mr. Blun hurried his party into the omnibus. When they got home Aunt Rebecca, finding that Helen was not going to get much notice from her mother, went with the little girl to her room ; she helped her to undress, saying at the same time so many kind, cheerful things that Helen felt as she laid her poor little, tired and half aching head on the pillow, as if she ought to be ashamed for thinking so meanly of Aunt Rebecca ; to-night Miss Luxor was not at all like a prim, little old maid, but like a real angel.

Mr. and Mrs. Blun said nothing to each other ;

Mr. Blun because of Aunt Rebecca's whisper, and Mrs. Blun because she wanted him to speak first; then she would tell him what she thought of *his* friends,—Mr. Nevin, and the Ingoldsbys. She was cured however of wanting to get into society, and when she was undressing she fairly tore the *fichu* from her neck, and threw the China silk as far from her as possible. All that she had gained by the dress did not begin to make up for the mortification it had cost her.

In the morning poor Helen had to bear the clamors of her brothers and sisters, and to tell them about the party: they went into her room while waiting for the breakfast bell, having snatched the chance when Aunt Rebecca was busy with little Harry.

"Wasn't there no little boy there at all?" asked Walter.

"No," said Helen crossly.

"What a funny, poky party, without any boys," said Arden.

"What kind of dresses did the other little girls have on?" said Susie.

"Was 'oo dess the pittiest?" asked Lulu.

"What did you do at the party anyhow?" asked Walter, not waiting for Helen to answer the others.

"Was Mr. Nevin nice, just as he is when he comes here?" said Arden, like his brother not waiting to have Helen answer anybody else; and as Susie had made up her mind to find out what she wanted, she said again:

"Say, Helen; what kind of dresses did the other little girls have on? oh! tell me."

Lulu, getting no answer to her question changed it to:

"Did 'oo have lots o' tandy?" and she pulled as hard as she could at Helen's dress.

"I wish every one of you would let me alone," said Helen in a passion, and pulling her dress from Lulu in such a way it sent that young lady sprawl-

ing on her back, but as she was not hurt she did not scream, and she only said when she got up :

“‘Oos a toss ting.”

Walter took her part.

“She *is* a cross thing, Lulu ;” he said, “and I guess they didn’t have anything but pickles at the old party ; and that’s what makes her so sour. A party with pickles and girls—jolly, aint it ?” He burst into a boyish roar of laughter, and everybody else laughed too, except Helen. She was furious. It was bad enough to have to dread what the girls in school should say, but to be compelled to bear this, was too much, and she tried to slap them all and to drive them from the room. Then began one of their old fights, such as they used to have before Aunt Rebecca came, and Helen was forced to the floor by the united strength of her brothers, and as she lay there struggling against their blows and pinches, Aunt Rebecca came upon the scene. The boys desisted at once though she did not say a single harsh word, nor raise her voice ; but the way she called “Walter,” and the way she looked at him, made him cry out :

“I’m real sorry, Aunt Rebecca, but Helen got so cross because we asked her about the party, and then we forgot ourselves.”

The nurse smiled.

“I believe you,” she said “and it was disappointing not to be told about it, but Helen is tired, and we must not expect too much of her the very next morning after the party. And then it was a little too bad of you to come down to her room this way. But we’ll talk about all that afterwards, and as I was at the party too, by and by I’ll give you *my* account of it.”

“I wish *you* was Helen,” said Arden in his admiration of Aunt Rebecca.

The breakfast bell began to ring. Helen was not at all ready for it owing to the treatment her dress got

while she was on the floor ; the others bore no more trace of the fight than rumpled hair and flushed cheeks. But Aunt Rebecca had them all in order in a moment ; covering up Helen's soiled dress with a clean apron, and brushing her short curls out of their tangle.

When they were all seated at table no one would dream that there had been such an uproar among the children a few minutes before, nor that at the present moment there was a storm raging in Mrs. Blun's heart. If her husband would only say *something* about the party that would give her chance to speak ; but not a word did he utter. Mrs. Blun looked at Miss Luxor. That little woman seemed very happy, smiling at the children, attending to their needs in a quiet, watchful way, and when she had to correct their table manners doing it with a rare gentleness and tact.

This made Mrs. Blun still more angry. What business had anybody like Rebecca Luxor, a mere servant, if she was Mr. Blun's aunt, to be always so contented and to get along so much better with the children than even she, their own mother did ? She was glad when the meal was over, and her husband had gone to business, and Helen to school, and the children had been taken up stairs by Aunt Rebecca. Even then, she did not know what to do with herself being in no humor for either novel reading or fancy work, and even if she went out calling, she could not say much about her society success. The party had been a sore disappointment ; not one of the company had said he or she would like to meet her again, and whenever she thought of Mrs. Morrell she lost her temper entirely.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

HELEN BLUN went to school the next morning feeling very much as she had felt the morning when obliged to wear the shaker bonnet. Lizzie Morrell was the cause of her shame then ; and Lizzie Morrell was the cause of all her unhappy feelings now. " Always Lizzie Morrell," she said bitterly to herself, and then she wished Lizzie Morrell would die, or move away, she didn't care which. She walked slowly so as to get into the class room at the last minute ; that would give the girls no chance to ask her anything : but when she came in, Miss Robson said to her :

" The party's been too much for you, Helen ; there's Lizzie Morrell in her place, and she went to the same party, and she did not have to stay home a whole day for it either. But I forgot ; your dress was so fine, I suppose it took as much time to take it off as to put it on, and so you had to sleep later."

That cut poor Helen to the quick, but she hung up her bonnet and sacque, and took her place on the line trying to look as if she did not care ; but every girl in the class knew she did care very much, for her face got red, and she did not seem to be able to do anything but look at her finger nails.

At recess Lizzie and Nanny went off to talk in a corner, and the other girls crowded round Helen to hear about the party, and to express their surprise that she and Lizzie should have gone to the same place.

“And all the week you never told us that Lizzie was going, and Lizzie never said a word about going,” said one.

“I didn’t know Lizzie was going,” said Helen, and then, seeing that Lizzie was quite out of the way, she added :

“I’m sure I don’t know how she came to get an invitation, for you know the Ingoldsby’s are very rich and grand. You ought to see the house they live in and the servants they have.”

“Yes, yes ;” said one impatient little girl, “Lizzie told us this morning about the house. She got to school awful early—just to talk about it, I guess.”

“Oh, did she ?” said Helen with a smile, “that shows she isn’t used to such things, I wasn’t in any hurry to get here to talk about it. I took my time more than usual this morning.”

“I guess you did,” laughed one of the girls. “it made Miss Robson speak to you the way she did.”

“But that wasn’t as bad as what Miss Robson said about you yesterday, when Lizzie Morrell told her she was going to stay home to go to the party,” said another.

“About me ?” asked Helen very much surprised.

“She didn’t say your name, but she meant you,” and the little girl went on to tell all that the teacher had said.

Helen turned redder than ever.

“I guess I’ve got just as much brains as Lizzie Morrell has,” she said angrily, “and if Miss Robson speaks like that again, I’ll tell her so.”

“No, you won’t ;” said the girl who had spoken before, “you wouldn’t dare to.”

“I would dare to,” said Helen with a great show of courage, since this was all in the yard, and Miss Robson was at a safe distance, “and I think Miss Robson is the hatefulest teacher in this whole city.”

“Never mind about Miss Robson,” said another

little girl, "but tell us about the party. I'm just dying to hear what kind the dresses were—we couldn't get anything from Lizzie Morrell but that every thing was lovely. We asked how you looked, and she said you were the prettiest girl there."

"Did she?" said Helen, utterly confounded by that piece of news, it did not seem possible that Lizzie had said that.

"What else did she say?" she asked.

"Nothing," was the reply from two, or three of the girls at once, and then one went on, "only what we told you before, how beautiful the house was, and about the games you all played—that's all."

Helen was more astonished than she had been before. Could it be possible that Lizzie had not told about her drawing, and how she and Helen had met at the party as if they were strangers? She could not understand it, for she knew, that had she been in Lizzie's place, she would have boasted of it for a week. But, to hear that Lizzie had been thus nobly silent, took away a good deal of Helen's bitter feeling; it did not, however, make Helen noble enough to tell of the honor that had been paid Lizzie at the party, and after a little, she even began to boast in her old way, not meaning to boast very much, but forgetting herself in the heat of it, till when she finished, the girls thought no one at the party had been thought as much of as Helen, and that Helen's mother was the best dressed lady there. Then some one asked Helen who took Lizzie to the party; Lizzie had been most careful not to tell that.

"Her aunt, Mrs. Morrell," Helen replied.

There was a chorus of "ohs," and the girls crowded more closely about Helen expecting to hear some amusing things of Lizzie's aunt; but after the little girls complimentary remark about Helen, the latter could not find it in her heart to say anything unkind of Mrs. Morrell, and she said nothing.

One of the girls asked;

“What did Mrs. Morrell wear, and how did she act?”

“She wore a black silk dress, and she acted very well,” Helen answered.

Mr. Morrell had whispered to Lizzie that morning:

“Be easy with that little Blun girl; don’t say nothing to rile her; remember it’s human nature, Lizzie, and we must be patient with human nature.”

The words stayed with the child all the way to school, and when she found on reaching the class room that Helen had not yet come, and that the girls were impatient to hear about the party, her uncle’s words seemed to ring in her ears louder than ever. She made up her mind to say only pleasant things about Helen, then if anybody reported them Helen would not feel unhappy.

She could not bring herself to tell the girls about her sketch; it would seem so like boasting, and there was no chance till recess to talk to Nanny apart. So, now in a corner of the yard she was delightedly telling it all, and Nanny seemed to be listening with just as much delight. She quite agreed with Lizzie that it was just like a story; indeed, it would have done for one of her own little romances only that she disliked the Ingoldsbys too much to write about them.

What wonderful good fortune Lizzie had. Of course Nanny was glad for Lizzie’s sake, but why could she not have such good luck? Why, when Miss Ingoldsby seemed to be going to take an interest in her, did she stop all at once? was it because her mother was a washerwoman, or was it because Miss Ingoldsby saw something in her she did not like?

All these thoughts made Nanny very quiet, and kept her looking down at the ground till Lizzie wondered at it; then Lizzie became a little sad also, thinking that what she had told must have pained Nanny instead of having pleased her. But, just

then, Nanny looked up, and reading in Lizzie's eyes something of the little girl's feeling's, she threw her arms round her neck, and said :

"Oh, Lizzie ! it isn't that I'm not ever so glad for your sake, but I couldn't help thinking of the way Miss Ingoldsby treated me. I *am* glad for you, Lizzie, ever so glad," and she kissed Lizzie again and again.

Lizzie in return put her arm round Nanny's waist, and said :

"Do you think that I am going to let this Mr. Nevin and his sister, Miss Ingoldsby, be kind to me without telling them about you ?"

"Don't," said Nanny, showing a good deal of spirit, "doesn't Miss Ingoldsby know a good deal about me, already ?"

"Yes ; I know that," said Lizzie, "but Mr. Nevin doesn't, and it was Mr. Nevin found me out, and I know he would like you, Nanny, and then he isn't Miss Ingoldsby's own brother—don't you see ? so he might be ever so much nicer, and anyway, I think he is."

There was a good deal in that, Nanny thought, but still she would not have Lizziy say anything till she should ask her mother about it, and so she told Lizzie, adding .

"But Miss Ingoldsby wouldn't let her brother think any more of me than she does."

"Well, anyhow," said Lizzie, putting her arm more tightly round Nanny's waist, "when I get big, if I can make pictures that people will buy, you shall have some of the money, for we are going to be sisters, aren't we.?"

"Yes ; we'll be sisters," was the reply, "but I won't take your money, Lizzie, I'll do some kind of work, myself."

After that conversation, the day seemed very long to Nanny ; she was so impatient to get home to talk to her mother. She did not know that Mrs. Morrell

would have been with her mother long before three o'clock, and would have told all that she herself had heard from Lizzie ; and when she did get home, bounding breathless into the room, she almost screamed in surprise and fright :

"Mamma, what is the matter ?"

Mrs. Tavish was seated by the ironing table, her hands clasped idly in her lap, and her face as white as the cloth that covered the table. She roused herself at the sound of the child's voice, and smiled ; but the smile only frightened Nanny more, it was so sad, so utterly unlike her mother's smile.

"I am not very well," Mrs. Tavish said, trying to speak cheerfully, but her voice was faint and trembling, and a blue line seemed to come about her lips.

"It's a weak turn that came on when Mrs. Morrell was here, this morning. It frightened her a little, but I knew it would pass away ; and I am even better now, dear," taking Nanny on her lap and kissing her.

The party, Miss Ingoldsby, Mr. Nevin, Lizzie Morrell's good fortune, no longer had a place in Nanny's thoughts ; anxiety about her mother had driven out everything else, and she clung to her and sobbed :

"You are not going to be sick, mamma—you are not going to die."

"No, dear ; not yet ; I feel that God will not take me from you, my precious, for a little while."

"A little while ! only a little while—oh, mamma!"

The anguish in the little one's voice made the mother's face grow paler, but she said calmly :

"We must be satisfied darling with whatever happens, for God will do what is best, but we won't talk about that now. And I am better ; indeed I am. Now get your bread and milk, and I'll go to my work again."

It seemed to the child as if from that afternoon a great change had come to them both ; a change

surely had come to her mother—she fell so often into long fits of thought ; she had many “weak turns,” she often did her work as if she had no strength for it, but with it all she seemed to grow more and more tender to Nanny. Sometimes, when bidding the little girl good bye before she went to school, it seemed as if she could not let her go, and again, when Nanny returned, Mrs. Tavish’s face lit up in a way that made the child wonder.

Nanny felt as if she herself had grown much older from that afternoon, and she had a constant, haunting fear that her mother was going to die. Sometimes, she forgot those feelings in school, but it was only to have them the more when she got home. She had no heart to write her little rhymes or tales, and the portfolio on the old chair in the corner was never touched only when it was dusted.

She studied but it was with little ambition, and her only thought at home seemed to be to help her mother. She watched even when her eyes seemed to be on her book, for opportunities to save her mother an extra motion ; did the iron holder fall, Nanny picked it up before Mrs. Tavish had time to miss it ; was Mrs. Tavish about to raise the plaits of a freshly ironed shirt, Nanny knowing a knife would be needed for that purpose, brought it from the closet before her mother could turn to go for it herself. Did Mrs. Tavish seem more tired than usual, Nanny behind her back, quietly making a cup of tea, and as quietly placed it on the table, and thus with everything it was possible for her little hands to do. At such times not a word passed between the mother and the child, nothing save a smile, but a smile that was far more than words.

And from that afternoon, the party and the Ingoldsbys, were never mentioned. Nanny could not think of them without thinking of the dreadful day when she had found her mother so changed, so she could not bear to think of them at all. And Mrs.

Tavish seemed to have no wish to speak of them. Nor did Lizzie Morrell often say anything about them, and Mrs. Morrell, having talked so much of them on the day after the party was satisfied to let them rest till she should have another visit from Mr. Nevin, an event she confidently expected. Mrs. Morrell had gone back to Bartholomew, after her visit to Mrs. Tavish with an account of the poor widow which gave that kind hearted man a good deal of troubled thought.

Mrs. Morrell also was troubled.

"I don't know, Bartholomew," she said, "but I have my own misgivings that it's heart disease, or something like it, poor dear Mrs. Tavish has. She was taken all at once just as I got to telling about Mr. Nevin, and how mistaken we all were in thinking his name was Ingoldsby, and that he was the old man's step-son. She got as white as a sheet of paper, and her lips were fairly blue, and she reeled so, I thought she'd fall. I had to run to hold her, and she couldn't get her breath for ever so long. I was going to call one of the neighbors, but she held me.

She told me she gets these turns once in a while but not so bad as that one was; she said I needn't be frightened it would pass away."

Mr. Morrell shook his head.

"Such turns are always bad," he said, "I don't like them."

And when as the days wore on, Mrs. Morrell, who went regularly to see Mrs. Tavish always reported that Mrs. Tavish was no ways like herself, but pale and weak looking, Bartholomew used to shake his head, and say very gravely :

"That's very bad, Maria."

Lizzie generally heard Mrs. Morrell's report, and her uncle's remark, but she herself saw whenever she went to Nanny's home, the change in Nanny's mother, and more than all she felt that change from Nanny's own manner. Everybody was noticing the

child lately, even Miss Robson's stern heart seeming to be touched by the sadness in the little girl's face. It was such an utterly unchildish sadness, and there was so strange a silence and gentleness of manner with it. She never spoke only when spoken to, and then she always answered with a tone and a smile that seemed to go to one's heart. Even Helen Blun found herself catching some of the general pity for Nanny.

All the girls in the class had found out, somehow, that Nanny was so sad because her mother was ill ; but no one ever asked her how her mother was, knowing that Nanny could not bear it, for when this had been done, Nanny's eyes had filled with tears, and her mouth had trembled so she could not speak.

Even Lizzie never asked how Mrs. Tavish was ; indeed, she hardly talked much at all to Nanny now, but instead, at recess, she would put her arms round Nanny's waist, and the two would walk up and down the play-ground, Lizzie often pressing Nanny to her by way of showing her deep sympathy.

To have her mother die was the one dread of Nanny's life ever since she could remember anything. She often thought of a time when they lived in the West and one of her little neighbors lost her mother — what a terrible feeling of grief and loneliness came to herself as she saw the coffin borne out, and the motherless little girl in her mourning dress walking after it, lest she should ever lose *her* mother. And now it seemed to her as if that terrible event was going to happen.

Mrs. Tavish managed to do her work, but even Nanny did not know with what difficulty. Nanny did not dream how often when she herself was fast asleep, her mother lay wide awake beside her trying to think how long it would be before her strength would give way entirely, and repressing her sighs lest Nanny should hear them.

Even the neighbors who used to think Mrs. Tavish was proud because she kept so much to herself, were full of pity, and when they saw her in the yard hardly able to carry the basket of clothes to the lines, they insisted on helping her. The old couple in the basement felt great sympathy for Nanny—she who used to be so delighted to borrow Mr. Alcock's books of fairy tales, now for nearly a month, had not taken one : when he would have given them to her she shook her head in a sad little way, and said :

“I can't read them now.”

She would not let herself read them lest while doing so, she might miss an opportunity of doing something for her mother. Sometimes, she said to herself :

“If only I had a father, or a brother, or sister, but no one, only mamma, and God is going to take her.”

It was hard not to murmur, and often in the prayers which she said when her mother was not listening, she uttered in the grief of her heart :

“Don't be so cruel, God, for you will be cruel if you take my mother.”

But the very next minute she took it all back.

“Don't be angry with me God for saying that ; I know you don't mean to be cruel, but I can't live without her, oh, I can't.” and then she would hide her face somewhere so that her mother would not see, nor hear her.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

MR. MORRELL'S health kept on getting so much better, that by the middle of November, and just as the Indian Summer had begun, he thought he might venture to the street. Mrs. Morrell much delighted, went with him.

How good it felt to be out, and he seemed to grow stronger with every breath of the mild air. He leaned upon his wife's arm for a block, or so, then he found to his joyful surprise that he could get on very well without her support.

"I tell you what is is, Maria," he said, stopping all at once, "I feel so uncommon well and strong that I'd like to give Lizzie a surprise. She doesn't know a thing about my being out, and if you'll lead me as far as the school, I'll wait for her. It's nigh about three o'clock now," taking out a large, old-fashioned silver watch, "it won't be necessary to keep you, Maria, if you've other errands to go on, for Lizzie'll take me home all right, and won't it amaze Lizzie to find Dad waiting for her."

"Indeed it will," said Mrs. Morrell, as much pleased with the idea as her husband was, "but I'm most afraid to leave you, Bartholomew; I was going to see Mrs. Tavish, but maybe I'd better wait a bit with you."

"There won't be no need of it, Maria; only leave me at the school, and then you go ahead."

She went with him to the school yard, and as it

was very nearly three o'clock, the janitor had unlocked the gate of the yard and opened it very wide. There, when Mr. Morrell had propped himself against the fence, saying that he was quite comfortable, his wife left him. He made a striking figure with his large frame, and strong, rugged, kindly face. Not a child nor a dog had ever shrunk from that face. Just now thinking of the surprise he was going to give his niece, he was smiling—a smile that every feature took part in, and that made the little primary tots who always came out before the scholars of the grammar department, smile at him as if every one of them knew him.

“Bless their little hearts,” he said to himself, “it does me good just to look at them.”

At length the classes from the grammar department began to come out; the lowest grade first, and every girl looked and wondered at the stranger. But, like the primary scholars, his face seemed to win them, and though they did not smile at him so confidently, every one gave him a pleasant look. Lizzie's class came down with Lizzie herself among the first, and she waited at the foot of the stairs for Nanny. Then, they came through the yard together, so busy with each other that they did not see Mr. Morrell till they could almost touch him. Lizzie jumped and gave a scream of delight.

“Dad, dad! is it really you?” she cried, springing to his neck and kissing him, never minding that almost every eye in the yard was on her, and that Helen Blun was directly behind, wondering if this were Lizzie's uncle, the odd looking man she once had seen in a red flannel bag.

“Yes, it's Dad, and no mistake,” Mr. Morrell said, giving her a kiss and looking such a picture of good nature and delight that every child in the yard felt drawn to him. He caught sight of Nanny, and her little pale, sad face went to his heart.

“Nanny,” he said, holding out his hand to her,

“dear little Nanny that I haven’t seen for so long.”

Her heart seemed to jump at the sound of his voice, and when she felt his hand close affectionately on her own, and met his eyes turned upon her with such a look as she thought her own father—were he living—might have given her, she felt that she could have thrown herself on Mr. Morrell’s breast and have told him all the fear and the grief which she could not tell even to Lizzie.

They passed out of the yard, Lizzie on one side of him, Nanny on the other, Lizzie asking many questions as to how he had got down stairs, how long it took him to get to the school, would he soon be able to walk without the cane, and other questions of like import, forgetting everything but the wonderful joy of having him on the street again. Nanny said nothing only when Mr. Morrell spoke to her, which he did as often as she could get a chance with Lizzie’s chatter.

When they got to the corner Nanny with a smile turned to leave them, but Mr. Morrell caught her.

“There aint no need of your going home just yet, Nanny,” he said, “for my wife left me to go to see your mother, and she’ll stay at your house a good hour, so you come with Lizzie and me for a little walk, and your mother will guess what keeps you, because Maria will tell her how she left me at the school.”

Nanny hesitated ; she did not care to go home while Mrs. Morrell was there ; kind as Mrs. Morrell was, and thankful as Nanny felt to her, there was something about her that to the sensitive child just at this time, seemed to be a check on the fond manner with which mother and child always met on Nanny’s return from school.

“Come,” said Mr. Morrell, still holding her, and smiling affectionately at her, “we’ll just go far enough to have a little ice-cream. I guess Lizzie won’t mind,” turning to his niece.

“Mind ! you dear old Dad ; you know I just think

it's splendid, and with Nanny it's more splendid still," said Lizzie dancing over to Nanny.

"Of course you'll come, Nanny," she went on, "come for my sake, and your mother won't mind so long as Mrs. Morrell's there, and we shan't be very long; shall we Dad?"

"No, not so long but that Nanny 'll get home I guess, before Maria thinks of leaving," he answered.

So Nanny consented; not because of the tempting offer of the ice-cream, for all the delicious things in the world could not keep her for a moment from her mother, but for Lizzie's sake and to please dear, kind Mr. Morrell.

They turned into one of the streets that led to the Bowery, Lizzie still chattering, and her uncle making the most of every opportunity to speak to Nanny, in order to make her forget her sad feelings a little.

All at once Lizzie said:

"There is Oleander Thimig."

Sure enough; there he was actually crossing the street to them, and looking more awkward than ever under a clumsy load of coffin stools. His thick, stiff coarse hair was sticking out from under his cap like bristles, and his coat was too short in the sleeves, and too short in the skirts, while his pantaloons were much too long for him.

He was the same odd looking boy Nanny had seen once before, and she remembered him at once, but she was too much surprised to speak.

To Thimig it had seemed easy enough when he saw the party first, to cross to them, and say how glad he was to see Mr. Morrell out, but when he reached them, and saw Lizzie's laughing eyes fixed on him, and recognized the little girl to whose house he had been sent so secretly with the gold piece, not a word could he utter. All that he could do after he had put down his load, and while he got red from his hair to his collar, was to grin, look in a sort of shamefaced way from one to the other of the little party, and rub his hands together.

"How do you do, Thimig?" said Mr. Morrell.

Thimig nodded to show that he was quite well, but he went on looking from one to the other as before.

"We must be going," said Mr. Morrell, seeing Thimig would not speak, and he began to move forward.

That movement enabled Thimig to get back his voice, and he said in his stupid way :

"*She* don't know, now? does she?" looking at Lizzie but winking at Nanny, to show that "she" meant her.

"Don't know what?" asked Mr. Morrell in surprise; he had forgotten everything about the money sent to Mrs. Tavish. Lizzie remembered it the moment she saw Thimig, but she hoped that either Nanny would not recognize him, or if she did, that she would not be sharp enough to devine who had sent the money. Now, however, the stupid fellows questions were sure to disclose everything, and fearing that, she pulled her uncle's coat and said :

"Come on Dad; he doesn't know what he's talking about."

That was the worst thing Lizzie could have said; stupid as Thimig was, he was not too stupid to feel hurt at being spoken of in that manner, and he felt it all the more coming from Lizzie's lips.

"You don't mean as I'm a ejeet?"—he meant idiot—"Lizzie, do you?" he asked piteously, and he looked so ludicrously woe-begone, that Mr. Morrell laughed aloud; even Nanny smiled.

But Lizzie was getting nervous; if they waited much longer there was no knowing what the lout might say, and she tugged again at her uncle's coat, saying :

"Come, Dad."

That made Thimig desperate.

"Do you mean as I'm a ejeet, Lizzie? a borned ejeet?" he said in a more piteous tone of voice than before.

"Come, come, Lizzie," said Mr. Morrell, still quite forgetting all that caused his niece so much fear, and anxious in the kindness of his heart to relieve the poor creature's distress, amusing though it was, "say something to comfort this poor fellow."

"Thank you, Mr. Morrell," said Thimig, and then in his anxiety to prove that he was not an "ejeet," he forgot altogether the secrecy to which Lizzie had bound him.

"She might have knowed," he went on, jerking his thumb toward Nanny, "and again, she mightn't have knowed what it was you didn't want her to know."

Lizzie gave a dig into her uncle's side under his coat; it made him wince, but at that very moment it flashed upon him about the five dollar gold piece which had been entrusted to Thimig.

"O-o-oh!" said Mr. Morrell; but it was too late. Nanny's face showed that she knew all about it. Lizzie was very red from anger with Thimig, and fear lest Nanny's feelings had been hurt. Then Mr. Morrell said, thinking it the better way to pass over what had happened as quickly as possible:

"It's all right, Thimig; you didn't mean any harm, and Lizzie 'll say it's all right too. Come!" saying the last word to the little girls and all three started again to go on. But Thimig was not satisfied; he placed himself before Mr. Morrell, saying:

"*She* don't say as it's all right—*she* don't say as I aint a ejeet."

"You aint an ejeet, there!" said Lizzie, as the only means of getting away, but her eyes flashed on Thimig in a way that was not at all pleasant to him. But he made no further effort to keep them; he only watched them till they were out of sight, when, taking up his load again he said mournfully to himself:

"There's no knowing how to take a girl; specially a girl wot has flashin' eyes like Lizzie Morrell."

Mr. Morrell talked to Nanny all the way to the ice-cream saloon, and Lizzie thinking that he did it so as to get Nanny's mind away from what stupid Thimig had said, was careful not to draw any of the conversation to herself. Nanny hardly knew how she felt; she was very thankful to the Morrells, and yet she was a little bit hurt that the money had come from them. Then, she wanted to thank Mr. Morrell and Lizzie, but somehow she could not.

She had little relish for the ice-cream though she began to eat it, as if she cared for it very much, but at the third mouthful her mother's pale, tired face came before her as she so often saw it drooping over the ironing table, and the thought of how good the cool cream would taste to her, closed Nanny's throat against another bit.

"I'm very much obliged—it's very nice, but I can't eat any more, thank you," she said, her voice trembling in spite of her as she pushed her plate back.

"Why, what's the matter?" asked Mr. Morrell, so much astonished that he put down his own spoon, and pushed his plate back, "I thought you liked ice-cream, Nanny."

"I do," she said, her voice trembling still, "but I don't care for it to-day."

Perhaps it was the childlike simplicity of Mr. Morrell himself that made him sometimes read so well the feelings in children's hearts, for he knew in a moment what was going on in Nanny's heart, and while Lizzie only looked, not knowing what to say, he said in his cheerful way:

"Maybe your mother won't want to eat her ice-cream when you tell her you didn't take yours; for I'm going to ask you to take her some. She won't mind when you tell her I sent it, will she? and I'll give the order now, so they'll be putting it up."

The last words were an excuse to get away from the table for a moment; for Nanny's eyes had filled

with grateful tears, and Mr. Morrell's tender heart could not bear the sight.

When Nanny could get her voice, and when she had dashed away the tears, she said to Lizzie :

"How kind your uncle is."

Lizzie nodded, not trusting herself to speak for Nanny's tears had made her own eyes fill, and when Mr. Morrell came back to the table he feigned not to see either of them, and he talked away merrily, and ate his cream as if he relished it very much. Nanny ate hers also, and when she was given the package, wrapped in a manner to keep the cream from melting, she could only falter :

"Thank you."

But all the way home after she had parted with her friends her heart seemed to be bursting with gratitude to Mr. Morrell.

"I love him," she said to herself a dozen times.

As she got near her own house she saw Mrs. Morrell going down the steps ; and Mrs. Morrell to Nanny's great satisfaction without even looking towards the little girl, took an opposite direction.

Mrs. Tavish was standing in the doorway.

"My darling, I came out to look for you," she said, as Nanny bounded to her.

"You were not worried, mamma ; Mrs. Morrell told you, didn't she, how Mr. Morrell went to the school ?"

"Yes, dear ; and that kept me from being anxious ; but I was longing for you, Nanny."

They had reached the room by this time, and Nanny put her parcel down carefully on the table ; then she threw herself into her mother's arms, and for a moment neither spoke. Then, Nanny delightedly unwrapped the parcel, and brought a plate and spoon from the closet, saying :

"And while you are eating it, mamma, I'll tell you all about it."

"But two spoons dearest, I couldn't take a mouthful unless you have some."

“I have had mine ; and now, if you don’t eat, I won’t tell you,” taking the spoon and beginning to feed her mother. That made Mrs. Tavish draw up her chair to the table, and begin to eat while Nanny sat down at her mother’s feet.

“So that is where the five dollar gold piece came from,” said Mrs. Tavish, forgetting to go on eating in her surprise, when Nanny had told all about the meeting with Thimig.

“What kind friends these Morrells have been.”

“Yes, mamma ; but I love Mr. Morrell best of all,” and then Nanny told what had taken place in the ice-cream saloon.

A lump came more than once into Mrs. Tavish’s throat while she listened ; it made her long in finishing the cream, and it made it difficult for her to speak without showing how near to crying she herself had come ; very near it, indeed, when Nanny said :

“Mr. Morrell seemed to know just what the matter was, mamma, when I couldn’t eat any more ; it would have choked me when you didn’t have any.”

CHAPTER XXXIX.

MRS. MORRELL was very much worried about Mrs. Tavish ; so much so, that she began visiting her every day, in order to do much of Mrs. Tavish's work for her, and resist as she would, Mrs. Tavish could not prevent it. Mrs. Morrell only laughed at every protest the widow made, worked with all her might for three or four hours, and went away looking and acting as if she had been doing the most natural thing in the world, instead of a great and unusual act of kindness.

Perhaps it was because the shadow of death seemed to be in that poor little home, that Mrs. Morrell had neither thought, nor wish to make much even to herself of what she did. The hours she gave to working for Mrs. Tavish, caused Mrs. Morrell to rise much earlier in the morning in order to attend to her own home duties, and it often kept her from the afternoon walk she took so much pleasure in. But she did not seem to mind, and her husband was only too happy to have her do anything for Mrs. Tavish. He even said, that Mrs. Tavish should see his doctor, but when Mrs. Morrell told that, Mrs. Tavish shook her head.

"Mine is a case," she said, "that no doctor's medicine can help. Thank your good husband for me, but tell him I do not need a doctor. Tell him also, dear Mrs. Morrell, that what you are doing for me every day is keeping me up, and that after a little, I shall be strong again."

Lizzie, of course, knew of her aunt's kindness · her

uncle had told her about it with pride and delight, and Nanny had tearfully talked about it. It made the little girl somewhat ashamed of her own feelings for Mrs. Morrell, but her proud, wilful spirit would hardly acknowledge that shame to itself.

Mr. Morrell was able to go out every day now, and he meant when the spring came to go into business. Lizzie still took her lessons in drawing, making rapid progress, but seeing no more of Mr. Nevin. Mrs. Morrell was much disappointed that he had not called again, and she began to think he had lost his interest in Lizzie, but when she said so to her husband, he replied :

“ Maybe not, Maria ; we’re only a fortnight gone in December, and he maybe taken up with business. Perhaps about Christmas we’ll hear something from him.”

Occasionally, Mrs. Morrell spoke in the same strain to Mrs. Tavish, but she never got more than a sad smile in reply.

It was the Sunday before Christmas and such an unusually mild and beautiful day, that Nanny felt cheered by it, and to her joyful surprise her mother seemed much better, not suffering from the palpitation and weakness that so greatly distressed her. She even ate with more relish, and there was actually a little color in her cheeks.

Could it be that God was going to grant her prayer, and restore her mother’s health ? Going into the yard for a moment where the sunshine was so inviting, Nanny seemed to feel more like her old self than she had done since that dread October day on which the great change had come. She certainly looked more like her old self, and so old Mr. Alcock thought when he popped his head out of the basement to have a better look at her ; he said to his wife :

“ Nanny’s mother is better ; I do not need to ask, for I can see it in the child’s face.”

Her mother surely was much better, for when the

afternoon came, Mrs. Tavish said she would like to take a walk. This desire to go out gave Nanny great hope, and she ran joyfully to help her mother put on her bonnet and shawl, and then she put on her own little sacque, and quilted satin hood, with its white ruche; her mother had made both.

The mildness of the day had brought most of the people of the house to the front steps, and men, women, and children were seated on them in various states of ease—some of the men smoking. At the sight of Nanny and her mother every one arose to make way for them, and friendly hands were put forth to help them down the steps. Looks of pity were in every face, and low, kind voices told how glad everybody was at seeing Mrs. Tavish so much better. The widow's heart swelled with gratitude to them, and she said to Nanny when they had passed out of hearing:

“God bless the poor. It is only the poor who can feel for the poor.”

“Where shall we go, mamma?” asked Nanny when they were a block beyond the Bowery.

“I think I'd like a ride dear; I don't want to walk too much,” Mrs. Tavish answered.

They took an up town omnibus getting out at one of the streets which now has a great many elegant houses, but at that time had only a few. The street however, was not where Mrs. Tavish meant to go, and she said they would walk down the avenue a short distance. Nanny, not thinking there was anything strange in such a walk, held her mother's hand and went on.

“Let us turn down here,” said Mrs. Tavish, when they came to another street, and then for the first time the child began to think that the ride and the walk meant something more than she had at first thought.

“Mamma,” she said anxiously, “are we going anywhere?”

Mrs. Tavish did not answer, and Nanny frightened at her silence, looked up into her face. It was whiter than Nanny had ever seen it ; there was a small spot of red on each cheek, and her lips were drawn tightly together just as if she were trying to bear some great pain in silence. The child grew more and more frightened.

“Mamma!” she said, stopping all at once, and bringing her mother to a sudden stop also, “What is the matter? where are we? where are we going?”

Mrs. Tavish drew a long relieved breath ; then she smiled and said :

“I was afraid one of the old pains was coming on, dear ; and I was trying to keep it back. Come, we’ll walk a little further, and then we’ll go home.”

They went on, Nanny feeling somewhat relieved, but she was not quite satisfied ; however, she would not trouble her mother with any more questions just then. They came to a large, elegant house in the middle of the block. The broad stone steps, the carving on the great door, the large windows with their curtains of yellow silk and heavy lace, the broad, deep area, big enough to hold another house, all brought to Nanny’s mind the description Lizzie had given of Mr. Nevin’s home, and just as she thought that, her mother sank upon one of the broad stone steps, lifting her face which was entirely white now, and saying wildly :

“I can’t do it; Oh, I thought I could, but I can not.”

“Mamma, mamma ; what is it?”

The child was almost frantic with grief and fright, and had it been a thoroughfare, a crowd would have been drawn in a moment. But there was no one passing and the house itself seemed to be as still as the grave. But, hark ! there was a sound ; a click at the basement gate, and in another moment Margaret Anthon came out on her way to church. Hearing the sound of distress she hurried round to the steps.

“What is it?” she said, her kind heart wrung by

the grief of the child ; then seeing how ill the woman looked, she went on :

“ Come into the house and let me do something for you : you look very sick, my poor woman.”

Mrs. Tavish gasping for breath, tried to say no ; but Margaret took her gently by the arm to help her.

“ You must come in,” she said : “ just into the basement for a little while ; there will be no one there to see you, for all the other servants are either out or in another part of the house.”

Mrs. Tavish let herself be helped into the basement then, and when Margaret had placed her in one of the big comfortable leather chairs, she brought her some wine ; she also brought some milk for Nanny.

“ You look as if you needed it, poor little dear,” she said to the child who was almost as white as her mother.

Mrs. Tavish thankfully drank the wine : it seemed to make her much better, and then she said to Nanny, “ Take the milk darling,” and turning to Margaret, she added ; we thank you very much.”

“ Don’t thank me,” said Margaret quickly, “ for it’s all Mr. Nevin’s, but he’d give it to you himself if he was at home, and welcome. He couldn’t see anyone suffer and not try to help them.”

The red spots began to come again on Mrs. Tavish’s cheeks. Margaret went on :

“ There never was a better man, nor a truer gentleman than Mr. Nevin.”

“ You said he wasn’t at home, is he far away ? ” faltered Mrs. Tavish.

“ Yes ; he went abroad six weeks ago to look after some property I believe ; but he’s expected home next Friday.”

The red spots on Mrs. Tavish’s cheeks began to die away.

Margaret urged her to take more of the wine.

"It will give you strength to go home," she said, "have you far to go?"

"We can take the omnibus," answered Mrs. Tavish, evasively, and then, after a moment's silence she added :

"Has this gentleman you spoke of a family?"

"He has a step-father, and a step-brother and a step-sister, they're all living here with him, and with the exception of the sister they're as different from him as the black night is from the bright day."

"I think I'm well enough to go now," said Mrs. Tavish rising and drawing her shawl about her, but Miss Anthon begged her to wait a little, urging : "You don't look well enough to go out yet : indeed you don't."

All this time Nanny had not said a word, and she sat so still that she seemed like a little statue ; but her eyes were fixed sadly on her mother.

"Do you have those weak turns often?" asked Margaret kindly, as she pinned Mrs. Tavish's shawl closer about her.

"Not often so bad as this one was."

"Well, I hope you'll get home safe," unwilling to let the poor woman go. "If you will let me, I'll go home with you."

"No, no ;" said Mrs. Tavish earnestly, and catching Nanny's hand she seemed most anxious to get away. Margaret went with them to the sidewalk, and stood looking after them while they were in sight ; then she turned back to the basement. It was too late to go to Church, and she had no desire to visit. She felt much more like sitting down and thinking about her recent guests, wondering why the woman had seemed so unwilling to tell anything about herself—she had told neither her name, nor where she lived, and somehow, Margaret had not been able to ask her. Added to that, the face of the child who was so strangely quiet and mournful, haunted her—the eyes seemed to look at her from

the shadows of the room with a look that brought up Mr. Nevin's face, not as it was now, but as he looked when she lived in the family before.

The mother and child said nothing to each other till they got home—the mother because she felt too weak to talk, and the child because she was so full of sad, puzzling, frightening thoughts, she did not know what to say first. But when they were in their own room again with the door shut and Mrs. Tavish seated, Nanny burst out crying :

“I can't help it, mamma,” she said, “it seemed so dreadful to have you sick there, on the steps of *their* house, and then what you said about thinking you could do something.”

Mrs. Tavish seemed to gasp for breath, before she spoke :

“I thought I could ask them to do something for you, Nanny, and that is why we went out to-day, but when I got to the house I found I couldn't.”

“For *me*, mamma? what could they do for me?” looking through her tears at her mother.

“Perhaps, as Miss Ingoldsby once seemed to like you so much, she might be willing to do something for you if God should—”

She could say no more for Nanny was frantically crying :

“Don't mamma! don't say that; God won't take you. Let Mr. Morrell's doctor come and see you, or let me go to the dispensary for one—maybe they can do *something* to make you live. Oh, mamma! you're not going to die! say you are not, or my heart will break.”

It almost seemed so from the passion of grief into which the child had worked herself. She could not speak any more for sobbing, and her mother's lap where she had hid her face was wet with her tears.

“God give me strength,” murmured the mother, and then she said as firmly as she could :

“Nanny, you are making me suffer more.”

That was enough ; one more little quivering sob, and the child had stopped crying, but there was still a lump in her throat. She clasped her hands together and looked up ready to listen quietly.

"I may get better," Mrs. Tavish went on, "but I thought it well to try to do something for you lest I should not ; and I did not want to tell you, so as to spare you pain as long as possible ; but when I got to the house my courage failed. That is all, dear ; now we shall trust to Providence for some other way."

So the day that had begun with so much sunshine and hope ended in disappointment and sadness, and when Nanny found her mother could take no supper, it seemed as if her own little heart got as heavy as a stone. But, she tried not to show her feelings, choking back every sob, and often turning her face away so that no sign of her grief could be seen. She wondered how her mother would do the washing of the next week, even with Mrs. Morrell's help, for if she should be as weak on the next day as she was to-night, she could not even go for the clothes : and what should they do for money, but she would not ask.

"But I'm not going to school to-morrow," she said to herself, "I shan't leave her any more."

Mrs. Tavish silently watched Nanny as the little girl washed and put away the few supper dishes.

Then, when the well worn green cover had taken the place of the white supper cloth, and the lamp had been placed on the centre of the table, its light not enough to take away half the shadows, Nanny drew a chair for her mother in front of the fire, and a stool for herself beside it. And there they sat for a full hour, the hand of one clasped in the hand of the other, the child's head resting against her mother's arm, but neither speaking a word. Nanny at length thought her mother must be sleeping, and she feared to move lest it should disturb her ;

but a slight movement on the part of Mrs. Tavish caused the child to look up, and she saw that her mother's eyes were wide open and fixed with a strange look upon herself.

"I thought you were asleep, mamma," she said softly.

"No; I was thinking of you, my comfort, my blessing."

In after years how those words came back to the child, always bringing with them the poor little room with its dying fire light, its dim lamp light, and its clustering shadows, but more than all, with the white face of the quiet figure in the chair.

CHAPTER XL.

WHEN Mrs. Morrell made her usual visit to Mrs. Tavish the next morning, the first thing she said, was :

“We won’t go for any clothes, to-day, Mrs. Tavish ; just take the day’s rest, and to-morrow, maybe, we’ll do extra work.”

Not that Mrs. Morrell believed Mrs. Tavish would be better able to work on the next day, but that she felt she must say something to cheer both mother and child, and to keep the mother from any attempt to go out.

To Nanny’s surprise her mother had not objected to her staying from school, and now to Mrs. Morrell’s speech, her mother replied :

“Perhaps you are right, Mrs. Morrell: I am weaker even than I thought I was,” and she leaned back in her chair and closed her eyes in a tired way, while Mrs. Morrell brought out from a little basket that she carried, some deliciously broiled chicken, and a bowl of jelly. The chicken had been so well wrapped up it was hot yet, and it tempted the poor sick woman as nothing cooked in her presence would have done. She began to eat with such relish that Nanny in her gratitude kissed Mrs. Morrell and said :

“You are so good, Mrs. Morrell, I love you as if you were *my* aunt.”

“You poor lamb,” said Mrs. Morrell trying to

hide the tears that had rushed to her eyes, "there's enough for you, too."

And there was enough, for the good hearted visitor never brought scanty supplies, and giving way to the entreaties of her mother, Nanny ate also. While they were eating Mrs. Morrell said :

"I have a little business to do, and so long as we won't get the clothes to-day, I'll go and attend to it ; but, I'll be back in an hour, or so."

Mrs. Morrell's business was to call on her husband's doctor and send him to see Mrs. Tavish ; there was no use in wasting time trying to get Mrs. Tavish's consent, and there was, Mrs. Morrell thought, urgent need for a doctor.

When she told the doctor all that she knew of Mrs. Tavish's sickness, he said at once it was heart trouble, but he promised to tell his opinion after seeing the patient, alone to Mrs. Morrell—that lady would call to hear it in the evening. Then she hurried home to catch Bartholomew before he went out.

"Now, Maria, I'm proud of you," said that good man, when he heard what she had done in the matter of the doctor, "you showed judgment in just taking the case into your own hands, and you showed scriptural consideration in telling him to be careful what he said to the poor woman herself."

"But, Bartholomew, dear, if I'm any judge, Mrs. Tavish is not going to be well any more, and what is she going to do ? it will break that child's heart to have her mother sent to a hospital, and it would break mine to see her go."

Mrs. Morrell began to cry.

"Don't, Maria ; don't, dear !" said her husband, his own eyes looking wet, and then he asked :

"How much a week would keep them, Maria ?"

"There'll be the rent, and a bit of firing. and the week's support, though for the matter of that last, we could spare them enough from our own table ; and I could do the washing for her as I did before, only

I'd have to do it here, for she isn't in any condition to have work like that done in her own room, and then if I do it here, it will keep me away from her, and God knows she needs some one beside that child with her, bad enough."

Mr. Morrell had begun to walk about the room thinking very deeply. He stopped walking now, and putting his hand on his wife's shoulder, he said :

"Maria, we'll pay their expenses out of the little store that's set by to begin the business with; it aint nigh April yet, when the money's to be used for the business, and if much of it goes to keep this poor widow and her little one, it'll be for a good purpose."

"But supposing," said his wife, "that she should be sick this way into April and past it, it would be a great loss to you, Bartholomew."

"If she should be, the Lord will provide for us, Maria, but we can't, in any case have the mother and her little one parted, leastwise till it gets beyond our power to prevent it. So, you go ahead, Maria, doing what your kind heart tells you to, for you are a good woman, bless you!" and he kissed her.

Mrs. Morrell was crying more than before.

"Oh, Bartholomew! I'm not half good enough for the like of you."

When she went back to the Tavishes she found that the doctor had been there.

"And you never said a word about going to send him," said Mrs. Tavish smiling. "Oh, Mrs. Morrell, how can I ever be thankful enough for all that you're doing."

"Never mind about that," said Mrs. Morrell, "but tell me what the doctor said to you."

"He said I had been worrying about something."

"And what she needed most was rest and food," said Nanny, her face so much brighter than it had been, it cheered Mrs. Morrell to look at it.

"And she is going to have both rest and food

dear," said Mrs. Morrell, "now, don't you ask a question, but take what the Lord sends you, and to-morrow I'll tell the people you work for to get somebody else till you're quite recovered."

"Oh, mamma!" said Nanny, hugging her mother in her delight; but Mrs. Tavish insisted on knowing how Mrs. Morrell was going to do all that.

"Well, then, if I must tell you," said Mrs. Morrell, "here it is; but mind, it is none of my doing; it is all Bartholomew's."

And she told what her husband had said.

Mrs. Tavish did not answer; she only looked at Mrs. Morrell in a manner which made that kind-hearted woman say:

"Don't look at me like that, Mrs. Tavish, dear; you're not angry, are you? it's in the kindness of his heart Bartholomew's doing it, like as if you was his own sister."

"Angry," said Mrs. Tavish gently, "how could I be angry? I am overcome by all this goodness."

She turned to Nanny who was standing beside her and drew her down to her.

"Can we ever murmur again at what God wills, my darling, when He sends us such friends: He has well kept His promise of being a husband to the widow, and a father to the fatherless, and should He take me, he will take good care of you, my precious."

Mrs. Morrell was so touched by the sight of the mother and child that she was obliged to turn her head aside, but Mrs. Tavish's words caused a new thought to come into her mind.

In school that day Lizzie was impatient for the hour of dismissal so as to learn what had kept Nanny at home. Of course her mother must be worse, even Miss Robson said that, when she found that the little girl was not present, and everybody in the class looked pityingly at Lizzie.

What if Nanny's mother should be dying? Lizzie thought, and her heart seemed to stop beating for a

moment, for she put the case to herself imagining her own feelings were it Dad who was in Mrs. Tavish's place. When three o'clock came she had worked herself up to such a state of sad expectation that she was sure she should find Mrs. Tavish dead, or dying. She ran almost all the way, and when Nanny opened to her knock, Lizzie was so flushed and breathless, that Mrs. Morrell who had not yet gone home, exclaimed :

"Why, Lizzie child ! what *is* the matter ?"

Lizzie could only gasp :

"I was so afraid when Nanny wasn't at school that, that—that her mother—" she hesitated to say the rest.

"I know what you mean," said Nanny, putting her arms round Lizzie, "but it isn't so ; and your aunt has been here all day doing so much for us that mamma is better. Don't you think so ?"

Before Lizzie could answer, Mrs. Tavish held out her hand to her, saying with a smile.

"I am better, thanks to your good, kind aunt, and also to your kind uncle, much better, Lizzie dear."

"Don't make so much of what *I* do," said Mrs. Morrell laughing. Then she turned to Lizzie.

"When you go home tell your uncle I won't be back till evening. I have an errand to do when I leave here."

"Well, I am going now," said Lizzie seeing that she was not needed, and fearing Dad would want her.

At the hall door where Nanny went with Lizzie, the latter said :

"I thought to-day would never pass for I kept thinking of your being alone with your mother, at least part of the time. I didn't know Mrs. Morrell would stay with you so long."

"Why do you always call her Mrs. Morrell ?" asked Nanny who was so full of all that Mrs. Mor-

rell had done for her darling mother, she could not bear to hear Lizzie speak of her so coldly.

"If she were the wife of my uncle," Nanny went on, "I'd call her aunt."

Lizzie stared, "I never called her aunt in all my life," she said, "and she isn't *my* aunt."

"Well, I feel as if she were mine," said Nanny, "I love her for what she's done for my poor, sick mamma," and then she began to cry, and the sight of her tears took away from Lizzie all desire to say anything more against calling Mrs. Morrell aunt. When Lizzie parted with Nanny she had a most uncomfortable feeling, one that she could not put away.

"But I can't call her aunt," she said to herself as she went home, "and have her make me ashamed every little while—I can't do it," then, thinking how much Mrs. Morrell had improved in every way, she went on :

"I know she's better than she used to be, a heap better, and that she's good to me, but I can't call her aunt. It wouldn't be hard for Nanny Tavish to call her aunt, if Nanny was me, because Nanny's so good anyhow. Oh, dear! I *can't* call her aunt."

Then something within her seemed to say :

"Ask Dad about it," at which she stood still in a sort of dismay.

"Of couse," answering herself, "he'll say yes; I won't ask him; yes, I will; no, I won't; I can't call her aunt! oh, dear! I can't; I can't."

Mrs. Morrell's errand before going home was to call again on the doctor, and he told her that Mrs. Tavish's case was one of heart trouble, made greatly worse by some recent shock. He did not think she would get well, and he said there was great probability of her dying soon and suddenly. Nothing could be done for her except to keep her quiet and give her nourishment. And with all that ringing in her ears Mrs. Morrell went home, glad to find Bar-

tholomew alone ; Lizzie was in the kitchen getting supper.

Bartholomew shook his head when his wife told him.

"Poor little Nanny," he said, "it will be hard on her."

"Bartholomew," said his wife, "could you stand it if we were to take Nanny when she loses her mother? she and Lizzie are like sisters now."

"Adopt Nanny Tavish for our little one, you mean, Maria?" he said, speaking louder than usual in his surprise, and as Lizzie was just then at the partly opened door, about to go into the room, she heard him.

Lizzie had not ask Dad anything about calling his wife aunt, neither had she been able to put down the still small voice within her, and now to hear that Mrs. Morrell had proposed what of all things in the wide world Lizzie would have liked best, but what even she had not thought of naming to her uncle, seemed with one swift stroke to do away with all her unwillingness, all her dislike. Without waiting an instant she rushed to Mrs. Morrell, put her arms round her neck, and said :

"Aunt Maria! I love you now, as I never did before. Aunt Maria! Aunt Maria."

Perhaps never in her whole life had Mrs. Morrell been so happy. She did not speak but she pressed Lizzie to her ; Bartholomew, his face beaming with delight, was saying to himself :

"It's come right as I thought it would. Human nature 'll show its good as well as its bad, if we'll only have patience with it."

CHAPTER XLI.

THE very next morning Mrs. Morrell set out to tell the families Mrs. Tavish washed for, that she could do no more work. There were two beside the Bluns, and for those two she had made up her mind it would be enough to leave word at the door, but she thought it would be well to see Mr. Blun himself at his store. Telling all that to her husband he said she should wear her black silk.

“For,” said he, “good clothes makes human nature respected ; and since Mr. Blun was so civil to you at the party, Maria, it’ll be proper for you to respect him and yourself by dressing in your best. So, you just put on your black silk.”

“That elegant dress, Bartholomew, why this aint no time to wear that.”

“It aint none too elegant for you to wear any time, Maria, so you just put it on.”

And put it on, she did, and she looked so well and so nicely dressed, that Lizzie who was going to school at the same time her aunt was going out, felt actually pleased that their way lay together almost to the school-yard gate. Some of her classmates met her, and they looked with surprise, as if they could hardly believe that the tastefully dressed woman with Lizzie was Helen Blun’s “feather-bed tied in the middle.”

And Mr. Blun’s clerk, instead of saying as she heard him say when she called at the store before,

“There’s a woman to see you, Mr. Blun,” said :

“A lady to see you, Mr. Blun.” Mrs. Morrell said to herself :

“Bartholomew was right about the clothes.”

Mr. Blun came forward showing by his manner that he recognized Mrs. Morrell ; and Mrs. Morrell, feeling pleased at that, held out her hand, and said loud enough for most of the clerks to hear :

“How do you do, Mr. Blun ? I hope you weren’t very tired after the party.”

“I am quite well,” said Mr. Blun, taking her hand, but letting her do the shaking. Of course she must have come on business, and it would be against his discipline to waste any time in hand shaking, so he went on in his usual way.

“As to feeling tired after that party, since it took place two months ago, I have had plenty of time to get rested. What do you want, Mrs. Morrell ?”

But Mrs. Morrell did not want to come to her real business with Mr. Blun just yet. She desired to show off a little to the clerks for she felt that most of them were watching her.

“How is Mrs. Blun ?” she said, “I hope she didn’t mind what I said to her at the supper table that night ; I said to myself, that if she did, you were such a sensible, right minded gentleman you would—”

“Is this your business with me ?” interrupted Mr. Blun, sternly.

His sternness only made Mrs. Morrell angry, “No ; it’s not my business with you,” she said, but if you’ll have patience I’ll come to my business in a minute, after I’ve asked about our friends, the Ingoldsbys” —she was sure the clerks all knew what grand people the Ingoldsbys were—“the dear old gentleman, Mr. Ingoldsby ; he had a crick in his knee that night ; indeed I was afraid,” —

She was interrupted by Mr. Blun saying in a very loud, stern voice :

“It is against my discipline, Madame, to listen

to such talk as this," and turning quickly, he went to the back of the store.

She looked at the clerk nearest to her and said scornfully :

He's no gentleman, and everytime I said he was, I was lying, the Lord forgive me."

The clerk smiled and Mrs. Morrell went out, putting her feet down as if they were hammers striking a big nail at every step.

She was angry enough to give no notice at all of Mrs. Tavish's sickness, but to let the Blun family have the trouble of finding out for themselves why their washerwoman came no more, but she thought of Miss Luxor who had been so civil to her at the party.

"I'll just go to the house and see if she's there," she said to herself. and to the house she went ; as she was so well dressed she rang the bell of the upper door. Jane answered the ring and she was surprised to find it was Mrs. Morrell ; but it was the same friendly Mrs. Morrell she used to let in at the basement door ; and Mrs. Morrell took Jane's hand, and told her in a whisper why she was there.

Jane showed her into the parlor and then went back to the hall to see if Mrs. Blun were in sight as a ring at the upper bell generally brought that lady in to the hall on the floor above, so as to find out who the visitor was as soon as possible. Just now, however, there was neither sight nor sound of her, and Jane going back to the parlor closed the door so as to listen to a fuller account of the object of Mrs. Morrell's present visit

"Well," she said, when she heard all, "you could n't see a better one than Miss Luxor ; she's the cheeriest, kindest hearted body I ever met. The children are so improved in their dispositions, all but Miss Helen, since Miss Luxor came, that you wouldn't know them. And over Mr. Blun himself she seems to have a sort of power that his wife hasn't—many

a time I've noticed that Miss Luxor kept peace between them. And she'll be sorry for that poor Mrs. Tavish; I'll go up now and tell her a *lady* wants to see her."

"Do," said Mrs. Morrell, putting herself in what she thought was a true lady-like position in the easy chair, and looking with great satisfaction at her ample silken skirts.

Miss Luxor wondered who the lady could be, for with the prudence and the pride of spirited poverty she had given up all acquaintances when she became a nurse in the family of her nephew.

"It is strange she did not send her card," she said.

"No ma'am," said Jane with wonderful gravity considering her thoughts of what Mrs. Morrell might say if she were asked for her card.

Miss Luxor went down immediately, tripping so lightly and quickly that Jane stepped aside to let her go first, and just as she went into the parlor, Mrs. Blun thrust her head over the baluster.

"Is there anybody in the parlor, Jane?" she asked.

"Yes'm, a lady to see Miss Luxor, and Miss Luxor's just gone in to see her."

"Humph!" said Mrs. Blun astonished, and making up her mind at once to see who the lady was. As her room was in the front of the house she had nothing to do, but place herself at one of the windows and watch till the lady went out.

Mrs. Morrell, finding in Miss Luxor the same kind, gentle person she had met at the party, told all about Mrs. Tavish's sickness, and her own call some weeks before on Mrs. Blun. Miss Luxor's kind, sympathetic manner led Mrs. Morrell to tell even more, and by the time she rose to go, Aunt Rebecca knew all about Mrs. Morrell's own family, and as much about Mrs. Tavish and Nanny, as Mrs. Morrell knew herself.

Miss Luxor was very much interested, and though she did not say so, she had made up her mind that her nephew should be interested also.

Mrs. Blun not satisfied with watching from the window, went often to the hall to catch some sound of the visitors's voice, but the parlor door was shut and she could hear nothing. At length, however, her curiosity was satisfied, but when she saw that the mysterious visitor was none other than the hated and the feared Mrs. Morrell, she could hardly contain her anger against Miss Luxor.

"I suppose Rebecca struck up an acquaintance with her at the party," she said to herself, "but what business had she to make such an acquaintance, and to dare to invite her here."

But for all that angry burst to herself, she had not the courage to say a word to Rebecca, and Rebecca wisely decided to keep her own counsel till she could have a private talk with Mr. Blun.

The private talk caused Mr. Blun to say that his aunt and his wife should go to see Mrs. Tavish, taking with them some money from him.

But Mrs. Blun, when informed of her husband's wish, said :

"What? ask me to go to a place where he so disgraced me—no, indeed! as he himself went to see Mrs. Tavish, before, he can do it this time."

Aunt Rebecca turned to Helen who was present.

"Helen, perhaps, would like to go then. Nanny Tavish is her classmate, and it would be kind to go to see her now in her trouble."

But Helen followed her mother's example whenever she could, and as her father was not present on this occasion to make her afraid, she said with a toss of her head :

"No; I thank you. If she is in my class she's only a washerwoman's daughter, and I don't wish to visit her house."

"Helen!" said Miss Luxor in pained dismay, but

Helen's mother instead of finding fault with the little girl for having spoken so, called her to go with her to another room, so that they might both get away from Miss Luxor.

That very afternoon saw Aunt Rebecca in Mrs. Tavish's home. She met there Mrs. Morrell, and after the visit both Nanny and her mother felt that Mrs. Morrell's praise of the little woman was not a bit too much.

So many unexpected kindnesses came to Mrs. Tavish, now, that she began to think she might put off something which she had thought of doing speedily ; to doubt whether it needed to be done at all. But this doubt and hesitation made her health worse, and Mr. Morrell's doctor who made daily visits after his first call, saw there was something on the mind of his patient, and when he said so to her, she did not deny it.

Mrs. Morrell, at the first chance she could of speaking to Mrs. Tavish without letting Nanny hear, acquainted her with the plan of Mr. Morrell and herself to adopt Nanny should the latter become an orphan.

"So, you can make your mind easy, Mrs. Tavish dear, about the child's future. We can't give her riches, nor a grand life, but Bartholomew says she shall go to school till she gets all the education a public school can give her, and then if he is spared he'll try to make her a teacher, or something like that. She will have a comfortable home with us, and Lizzie and she will just be like real sisters : and I promise you, Mrs. Tavish, we shall treat Nanny as if she were our own child."

Mrs. Tavish did not reply ; she only leaned back in her chair and closed her eyes.

"Have I made you feel bad ?" asked Mrs. Morrell.

"I wouldn't have told you, but I thought it would ease your mind in case anything happened, and I see you so often following Nanny with your eyes just as if you were thinking about all that."

Mrs. Tavish said without opening her eyes.

“No, you haven’t made me feel bad, but you have made me feel so grateful to you, and your dear, kind, good husband, that I have no words to express it.”

“There’s no need for you to say a bit about that,” said Mrs. Morrell quickly, “won’t it be a blessed thing for us, if the Lord should call you, to have an angel like Nanny in our home?”

On the third day of Nanny’s absence from school, Lizzie brought her books to Miss Robson, with the message that as the time of Nanny’s return was uncertain, it seemed better to give in her books. And at the noon recess on that day when the teachers were together as usual, Miss Robson told how she had discharged Nanny Tavish. Miss Olden, who was no nearer to being forgiven by Miss Robson than on the day of her offence, at the mention of Nanny’s name stopped talking to hear further.

“Her mother is very sick, I believe,” Miss Robson went on, “and as she is a widow with only this one child it is necessary to keep her home.”

“Are they very poor?” asked one pitying young teacher.

“Well, I guess they can’t be very rich,” said Miss Robson, “when Mrs. Tavish does washing for a living.”

“A washerwoman?” said another teacher, “one would never think so from looking at Nanny ; she was always so neatly dressed—to be sure her clothes were dreadfully plain, but they were always so clean. There was one thing, her mother knew how to take care of her.”

“Yes indeed,” said Miss Olden, not able to restrain her praise of the child, “and all the time that Nanny was in my class she was one of the brightest, gentlest, sweetest little girls I ever had ; and so sensitive—she used to color at the least thing : and she was so timid at first about asking for explanations, that I had to encourage her all I could ; but she got

at last to ask questions without any hesitation, and she never asked one that was not intelligent."

Miss Robson was glaring at the speaker, and she could hardly wait for the last sentence to be finished, before she said sharply :

"I have found Nanny Tavish to be a very forward child, and so far from being timid about asking questions, or being able to ask intelligent ones, I have found her just the other way. I had to put her down the very first day she was in the class, and I have had to keep her down ever since. For my part I am very glad she has left."

Absolute silence followed that speech, and Miss Olden felt as if she had received a half dozen smart slaps in the face. If she had received them she could not have colored more, for every feature was as red as the crimson watch ribbon on Miss Robson's breast.

Then the teacher whose pity had led her to speak before, said again, thinking to make better feeling :

"Well, now that the poor little creature is in trouble as she must be with a poor, sick, widowed mother, you will go to see her, won't you, Miss Robson?"

"*I go to see her,*" said Miss Robson, not looking at the speaker, but keeping up her glare at Miss Olden, "I have too much to do to waste my time going to the home of forward children. Let those who encourage forwardness, and mistake boldness for intelligence, do so if they choose."

"Oh!" burst from more than one of the little circle, at that rude and pointed speech, and the manner of each while saying it was not at all complimentary to Miss Robson. But she looked as if she did not care.

Miss Olden was stung, and she wanted desperately to say something, but she did not know what, and the teacher who was nearest to her, put her arm about her and whispered :

“Don’t you mind, she ought to be ashamed of herself.”

Just then the bell rang, the signal for a return to their class rooms, and Miss Robson was the first to stand up, holding herself very erect, and saying as she walked with slow dignity from the room.

“I never let any one who brings a false charge against me, forget it.”

“I think she’s awful,” said the teacher who had spoken so feelingly before, when Miss Robson had gone; “even if she thinks Miss Olden did say something dreadful to her about the examination, she might forgive and forget it by this time.”

“So I think,” said another.

Sternfaced Miss Tibbetty put her head in at the door.

“Young ladies; this delay is unpardonable. The classes are filing into their rooms and not a teacher to receive them.”

They scampered then like so many children, but not without the satisfaction of a few side remarks about the cat-like qualities of Miss Tibbetty.

That afternoon, Miss Olden went to a florist’s, purchased an exquisite bunch of flowers, and with it went to see Mrs. Tavish.

Mother and child happened to be alone, and Nanny’s face flushed, and her eyes seemed to grow larger when she saw the teacher.

“Miss Olden!” she exclaimed, and then she seemed to become very much abashed, for Nanny in her simplicity held the now obsolete idea that all teachers were very superior beings. But Miss Olden went forward with so simple, pleasant and kindly an air, giving her flowers to Mrs. Tavish, that Nanny felt quite at ease again. It was a very pleasant visit, showing to Nanny so much that was kind and sweet in the young teacher, the child was quite drawn to her, and Mrs. Tavish could not help saying:

“Nanny seemed to get along in your class, Miss

Olden, much better than in the one she was promoted to. Her last teacher somehow always put her down, and it used to discourage Nanny very much ; but you, she used to tell me, were very kind in answering her questions and explaining things to her. In her last class the teacher seemed to want more that the children should sit up straight, and keep their eyes the one way, than that they should learn much. So, Nanny was happier in your class."

Miss Olden stooped and kissed Mrs. Tavish ; the kiss was for the comfort the sick woman had given her,—not comfort at hearing that she was thought more of than Miss Robson, so much as comfort from learning that though she could not keep the order Miss Robson did, the children learned in her class, and were happy there. Why then should she grieve because it was not given to her to command by a look of her eye and to keep ramrod discipline.

And with the comfort and encouragement so unconsciously given by the sick woman, there went away from Miss Olden a good deal of the bitterness and soreness Miss Robson had made her feel. When she took her leave it was with the promise of coming soon again.

CHAPTER XLII.

ON Friday of that same week when the doctor went to see Mrs. Tavish he asked Nanny and Mrs. Morrell to leave them alone for a few minutes, and when the two had stepped into the hall he drew his chair close to the sick woman, and said very kindly :

“My dear woman, you cannot get any better till you relieve your mind of its load ; it is helping to kill you.”

She nodded and smiled. He drew back a little and watched her, somewhat puzzled what to say next ; but she spoke :

“In any case I have but a very little while to live. Is not that it ? don’t be afraid to tell me.”

It was the doctor’s turn to nod, and Mrs. Tavish went on :

“I am going to relieve my mind, but it may take time, a couple of days perhaps ; perhaps more.”

“Better do it quickly,” he said.

“Will my death be very sudden ?” she asked.

The doctor wondered at the calm way she spoke, and he felt her pulse again to be sure that was as calm as she seemed.

“Don’t fear for me, doctor,” she said, “all this week I’ve been schooling myself to meet the very worst, and I think I am prepared. Now, tell me.”

“Well then, my dear woman, it is likely you will die very soon, and very suddenly.”

He still held her wrist, but the pulse did not beat any faster. She asked again :

“Is there a chance, a bare chance of my living for some time?”

“Yes; as you say, a *bare* chance that you may live for a few weeks, growing weaker all the time; but don't trust to that.”

“Thank you, doctor; now, that I *know*, I can act.”

He looked at her puzzled to understand her, but he said no more, and he went to the door and called Nanny and Mrs. Morrell back. That afternoon when Mrs. Morrell was putting on her bonnet to go home, intending to return in the evening, Mrs. Tavish said to her

“Do you think your husband could come to see me to-day? I would like to have a little talk with him.”

“To be sure he can,” said Mrs. Morrell, hardly surprised for she supposed the talk had reference to Nanny—of course the mother would want to speak of her child to the man who was going to adopt her.

Mr. Morrell took Nanny in his arms and kissed her when he went in, and she, not knowing why he had come, but feeling uneasy because of it, clung to him for a moment; his simple goodness and tenderness seemed like a great support in the midst of so much grief, and fear and wonder. When he put her down he did so slowly, almost as if he knew the feelings in her little heart, and when he went to speak to her mother he still kept the child's hand; he only let it go when he seated himself beside Mrs. Tavish.

“How good of you to come so quickly,” she said.

“There wasn't anything to keep me,” he said, “and when I heard you wanted to see me, I had to come right away. Maria said she wouldn't come till I got back, lest you might want to talk to me private like.”

“How good that was of her,” said the sick woman, her face flushing a little. “I do want to talk to you

in private, Mr. Morrell," then, seeing Nanny's eyes fixed upon her with a questioning look, she hesitated :

"Don't you want me to hear, mamma?" said Nanny, with a strange sinking of her little heart.

Mrs. Tavish put out her hand—it was trembling very much—and drew the child to her, Mr. Morrell moving his chair so that the little one could get quite close to her mother.

"Will you mind, darling, if I say I do not want you to hear? it is a little private business that perhaps Mr. Morrell who has been so kind, can help me with."

"Is it—is it mamma, about me when you are dead?"

Nanny sobbed out the words breaking at the last into such a passion of tears that tender-hearted Mr. Morrell could not bear it; he had to turn his head aside not to let his own feelings be seen, and to take out his handkerchief more than once.

Mrs. Tavish waited till the child's burst of grief had spent itself a little. Then she said with gentle firmness :

"Nanny, you would do anything in your power to spare me pain now, would you not?"

"Yes, mamma;" looking at her mother and trying very hard to speak without crying. Mrs. Tavish went on :

"Will it make my death any nearer even if I should speak to Mr. Morrell about what might be done for you afterward?"

"No," spoken with a sob which she could not keep back.

"Then, won't you be satisfied without grieving about it, to have me speak privately to Mr. Morrell? If it should seem well to tell you after, you shall be told, but in any case, believe that I have acted for the best. Now, my darling, go and stay with Mrs. Alcock for a little while. When it is time for you

to come back, Mr. Morrell will strike on the floor with his cane. You will hear him."

And kissing Nanny she lay back on the cushion of her chair with closed eyes and panting breath.

Nanny left the room, restraining her tears till she reached the porch that led to the yard; there she covered her face with her apron and cried wildly, but without making a sound. The offer of the Morrells to adopt Nanny had never been told to her, for the reason that she could not bear to hear anything relating to her mother's death; nor did she now think that it was anything like that Mr. Morrell had come to talk about. She did think, however, that it had something to do with sending her somewhere after her mother's death, perhaps to an orphan asylum, and that seemed like the last blow to her very last hope, for she had hoped in spite of all that her mother *might* get well; but now, that strange, private talk seemed like the funeral bell already ringing, and her grief grew greater. But in the midst of it she started, for her mother's order to go to Mrs. Alcock flashed upon her.

"I am disobedient," she said, starting up, "disobedient now, when she may die so soon," and hardly waiting to dry her eyes she went down to the basement. The old couple made her welcome, and seeing the traces of her grief tried to cheer her, but without much effect; though she cried no more, she had no desire to speak, and she sat very still, looking sadly before her.

In the room Nanny had left, the dying woman, for, she was little more, was telling a strange tale to Mr. Morrell. In all his life he had never heard anything like it. But he listened as calmly as though it were an every day story, and he only said when it was all told:

"I shall go to the house, now; if he is there, and he is a man, he will come back with me."

He spoke with a strength and determination that

in his simple honesty he was not aware of himself ; nor was he in the least excited—his movements were as slow and calm as though he were only going home. He struck with his cane on the floor for Nanny, and while she was coming he buttoned his heavy overcoat, and fastened the muffler about his neck.

“ Good bye, my dear,” he said to Nanny, lifting her again in his arms and kissing her ; then looking at Mrs. Tavish who was leaning back on her pillow as if she were much exhausted, he said all at once :

“ You are too weak, Mrs. Tavish, to be left alone ; I had better go home first, and send Maria here.”

Mrs. Tavish lifted her head and answered in a stronger voice than she had used before :

“ No, no ; go there ; quickly as possible. Don’t stop a moment. If I should need anybody, Nanny can call the woman in the basement.”

So Mr. Morrell went, and Nanny crept to her mother’s chair and knelt beside it, clasping the damp hand and pressing kisses upon it, but not daring to speak. For some time they remained thus, then Mrs. Tavish all at once opened her eyes and looked strangely about her.

“ Has he gone ?” she asked, lifting her head from the pillow but letting it fall back immediately.

“ Yes, mamma,” said the little girl in a whisper, being too frightened to speak aloud, for she had never seen her mother look like that before. Her fright had also stopped her tears, and it seemed as if it would stop the very beating of her heart if it should remain long. But Mrs. Tavish was quiet again, her eyes closed as before, and her white face looking whiter still in the shadows that came up as the afternoon wore on. Nanny shuddered as the shadows lengthened about herself, and she crept closer to her mother, whispering at length :

“ Mamma !”

“ What is it, darling ?”

The voice had its wonted tender tones, and the child felt less frightened.

“Shall I light the lamp? it is getting dark.”

“Yes dear; and then come back to me very close.”

Nanny did so, but the light seemed to make stranger shadows in the corners of the room than had been there before. Once even, the child fancied there was a shadowy presence behind her mother's chair, and it required all her will to repress a scream. But she shut her eyes and bent her face to the clammy hand she was holding again with both of her own, trying at the same time to remember all that her mother used to tell her about the folly of believing in ghosts, and at length, she conquered herself enough to open her eyes and look again; there was nothing but the shadow made by the lamplight. But, at that instant, Mrs. Tavish lifted her head once more, and this time seemingly with much greater strength, and looking wildly about her, she said, as if she were asking a question.

“Not yet? not yet? Oh God! how long!”

Nanny sprang to her feet, her first and only thought being that her mother was raving and perhaps about to die immediately.

“Mamma!” she called, her voice shrill from agony. “You are worse, I'll knock for Mrs. Alcock.”

But she found herself held. The clammy hand had wound itself into her dress with a strength it did not have a week before, and Nanny was pulled to her knees again.

“Don't call her; don't call any one.” The words were spoken with strange distinctness, and after a second, Mrs. Tavish said again with the same strength and distinctness:

“Promise me you will call no one till *he* comes.”

“I promise, mamma;” said the child, thinking her mother meant till Mr. Morrell came back.

There was another few minutes of quiet during which it seemed to Nanny as if she could hear the

beating of both of their hearts. The mournful mystery about her had entirely stopped her tears, but her grief was none the less.

She appeared to herself to be no longer a little girl, but some one many years old, fighting against a sorrow that made the whole world a waste to her. Never having known what it was to be a single night away from her mother, how should she bear the *years* of the future without her? Who could, or would be as tender to her, as self sacrificing for her comfort, as that poor, fond, overworked mother? And then Nanny's dry, burning eyes looked from the white face to the pale hands of the sick woman, one she held, the other rested in full view on the quilt that partly covered the chair.

Though the hands had lost some of their coarse, toil worn look, they still showed the hard work they had done, and Nanny kissed them both softly; then she turned her eyes again to her mother's face. She wanted to stamp on her heart every line, every wrinkle in those beloved features. The wrinkles had been worn by care and toil for her.

CHAPTER XLIII.

MR. MORRELL had gone straightway to the house of the Ingoldsbys ; and he rang the bell of the grand door and asked for Mr. Nevin.

"Mr. Nevin," repeated the servant, eyeing Mr. Morrell's humble dress as if he wondered what business such a plainly dressed man could have with Mr. Nevin.

"Yes, I want to see Mr. Nevin," said Mr. Morrell, with a steady look at the man, and with such a tone of quiet firmness, that he was shown at once to a little reception room opening from one of the parlors.

Margaret Anthon was in the parlor directing the work of one of the servants. She had not heard whom the stranger had asked for, nor did she show any curiosity when he went into the reception room and took a seat near the door just where she could see him.

But the man who had admitted Mr. Morrell, when he saw Margaret, said :

"Come this way," turning to a room on the other side of the broad hall.

That did not seem to please Margaret.

"The gentleman can stay here, Mat," she said, "I'll close this door," going to the door that separated the apartments. But Mat said quickly :

"No ; it is better for him to wait in one of the rooms on the other side of the hall."

Margaret said no more, but went on with her

work ; her face however, had a look, that Mat would not have liked could he have seen it.

In the room on the other side of the hall, Mat shut the door behind him, when he went in, and he asked in a soft, polite tone :

“What name shall I give ?”

“Morrell,” said the visitor.

Mat knew his business too well to go to Mr. Nevin ; he went to old Mr. Ingoldsby.

“Morrell ! Morrell ! that is the name of that disgusting creature who was at the party,” said old Mr. Ingoldsby, “it can’t be that she has the boldness to send her husband here. You did not tell him Mr. Nevin was at home, did you ?”

“No sir ; I didn’t say whether Mr. Nevin was at home or not, I just got his name and brought it to you, as I do with every stranger who asks for Mr. Nevin.”

“That is well, Mat ; I’ll see him then.”

“I put him in a room on the left of the hall,” said the man again, “so that Margaret Anthon wouldn’t overhear his name, and tell it afterwards to Mr. Nevin in case she should find out who the man came to see : she was in the parlor on the right, when I let him in.”

“You *are* a good one, Mat, and I shan’t forget you at the end of the month,” said Mr. Ingoldsby slapping his thigh with his hand.

Mat went away well satisfied, and Mr. Ingoldsby went down to the visitor ; but he forgot to close the door of the reception room when he went in.

Mr. Morrell rose, disappointed when he saw a little gray headed gentleman come in, instead of the man he expected to meet, and he said, his disappointment showing even in his voice :

“You are not Mr. Nevin, sir.”

“No, I am not,” said Mr. Ingoldsby, feeling strangely uneasy before this large, simple, homely, but firm looking man. “but I am Mr. Nevin’s father,

and it will do equally well to tell your business to me."

"Oh, no," said Mr. Morrell, with a resolute shake of his head, "what I have to say must be told to Mr. Nevin, not to his father."

"But Mr. Nevin is not here," said Mr. Ingoldsby, beginning to feel still more uneasy, "he went on a long journey and he hasn't got back."

"Why didn't the man tell me that?" said Mr. Morrell looking suspiciously at Mr. Ingoldsby. "I knew Mr. Nevin went on a journey six weeks ago, but he was to be back to-day."

Mr. Ingoldsby's red face got redder. How did this stranger know so much?

"Sit down my man," he said making up his mind to bribe him by pretending great friendliness, but Mr. Morrell did not sit down.

"If I mistake not," Mr. Ingoldsby went on, "you are the husband of Mrs. Morrell who was at a party in this house some weeks ago."

"Yes," said Bartholomew shortly, and looking as if he were not at all impressed by the old gentleman's friendliness.

"Well, now if it is a favor of any kind you want from my son, it is in my power just the same, to serve you."

Mr. Morrell, who had begun to move toward the partly opened door, turned and fixing his eyes on Mr. Ingoldsby with a steady look, said:

"I want no favor from either of you; but my business is with Mr. Nevin. Since I cannot see him here, I must find some other way."

"What is it, Mr. Morrell, that you want with me?"

It was Nevin himself in the very doorway and holding out his hand to Mr. Morrell.

Margaret Anthon, with little effort on her part, *had* overheard enough of the conversation between the visitor and old Mr. Ingoldsby, to make her go

with all speed to her master's room where he was resting after his journey, and it took but a few minutes for him to reach the scene.

Then for the first time did Mr. Morrell seem to lose his composure. He clasped Mr. Nevin's hand, and said :

"Thank God !" in a tone that sent fresh dismay to the heart of Mr. Ingoldsby. At the sight of his step-son his color had deepened till it got purple, and his tongue seemed to grow thick in his mouth.

Mr. Nevin turned to him.

"Father, I have heard enough to know that Mr. Morrell has private business with me. Leave us please."

The old gentleman went out of the room hardly knowing how he did so for the ringing in his ears and the blur before his sight. He was groping like a blind man in the hall when Mat met him.

"Where are you going, sir? what is the matter?"

But the only answer was a jumble of :

"Not a penny—all gone—no home—come at last."

"He's lost his mind," said Mat frightened, and he rang for help. A half dozen servants came. It took three to carry the old gentleman to his room for he would not be led in any direction but a circular one that brought up just where he started. Mat went to tell Miss Ingoldsby, another servant rushed for a doctor, while the others held themselves in readiness to be sent anywhere.

Within the reception-chamber Nevin, who had given but a glance at his step-father as the latter passed out, and who had shut the door tightly after him,—leaned forward and said kindly :

"Well, Mr. Morrell, what is it?"

Mr. Morrell seemed to brace himself before he spoke ; but even then his voice trembled.

"A woman who was Mary Denton eleven years

ago, is dying at—Rivington street. She has one child, a daughter, ten years old ; will you come with me now to see her ? Her time I think is very short.”

Nevin started, and his face got so white and drawn it made him look ten years older, but, without saying a word he caught Mr. Morrell's hand and drew him from the room into the hall ; then he turned to the street door. When they reached it seeing that Nevin was going out bareheaded, Mr. Morrell reminded him of his hat. He turned mechanically to the stand and took one that hung there.

“Your overcoat,” said Mr. Morrell again, “it is cold.”

“Cold,” repeated Nevin, “the fever within me will keep me hot enough.”

And thus they went, knowing nothing of the excitement they left behind them.

“We'll get a carriage on the next street,” Nevin said, and he walked so rapidly it was difficult for Mr. Morrell to keep up with him. During the ride not a word was spoken, and it was too dark,—except on a chance flash of a street lamp—to see each other. At such times Mr. Morrell saw his companion's face still with its white, drawn, old look. And Nevin seemed to have forgotten that he was not alone till the carriage stopped, when, without waiting for the driver to get down, he opened the door saying to Mr. Morrell :

“Is this the place ?”

“Yes,” was the answer. Then they both got out, Nevin telling the driver to wait, and Morrell led the way up the dirty half worn steps, and into the cold, dirty hall. The dim light of the oil lamp set in a niche in the wall seemed to make things look dirtier and colder. When they got to the door of Mrs. Tavish's room, Mr. Morrell whispered :

“I'll wait here, Mr. Nevin, in case you might need me.”

Nevin started, and then he stood still, almost as

if something held him. All at once there was a cry from the room, a child's shrill, wild, agonizing cry.

"Come in with me," said Nevin in a hoarse voice, catching Mr. Morrell's hand, and then he turned and opened the door without knocking.

The figure in the chair was still with that awful stillness that makes one shudder, her head lying helpless in the arm of the frantic child.

"Mamma !" she cried, not even turning to see who had entered, "speak to me once more."

"My God ! she is dead !" said Mr. Morrell shaking like a leaf, and going to the chair ; but Nevin got there before him, and he knelt and clasped his arms round mother and child.

"Mary !" he called in such a voice that Mr. Morrell never could think of it without a shudder, "I am not to blame ; say one word to me."

Whether it were that her spirit had not yet begun its mysterious journey, or that the supreme anguish in his voice had power to call her back, no one could tell, but she opened her eyes, smiled at him, and whispered :

"I told Nanny. She knows you are her father."

That was all. The eyes closed again, the smile faded away, and Nevin's arms held now not alone the corpse of his wife but the unconscious form of his child. The awful strain of the past two hours had ended at last, and with her mother's outgoing spirit, her own went also into forgetfulness for a little while.

CHAPTER XLIV.

BOTH Mrs. Morrell and Lizzie began to feel anxious about Bartholomew's long stay with Mrs. Tavish, and when eight o'clock came without bringing him, Mrs. Morrell could bear it no longer.

"I'll go round there," she said to Lizzie. "Maybe something's happened that he can't get away, and he has no one to send word to us."

So she went, meeting her husband midway on his return.

"Oh, Maria! I am so glad," he said, "I only wish you had thought to come before. Mrs. Tavish is dead, and Nanny's only just got out of a faint. I had to go for the nearest doctor for her."

"Dead!" said Mrs. Morrell, "oh Bartholomew;" beginning to cry tears of real friendship and sorrow.

"But that is not all, Maria; Mr. Nevin is there, and he was Mrs. Tavish's husband, and Nanny's father. It was to tell me all that and to send me to Mr. Ingoldsby's house for Mr. Nevin. that she wanted to see me this afternoon."

Mrs. Morrell fairly staggered with astonishment, crying in a tone of doubt:

"Bartholomew!"

"It's all gospel truth, Maria, for Mr. Nevin's there himself a taking on like a woman with grief—the way he cried over Nanny would have melted a stone. It's a strange story but I haven't time to tell it to you now, and don't you ask any

questions when you get there, Maria, for I'll explain it all to you the first chance, but just do what you can for them. I'm going now to get Mr. Brush to attend to the remains just for the present, for Mr. Nevin's going to have them embalmed and buried from his own house, and I told him I'd bring Lizzie back with me, maybe the sight of her would do Nanny good."

"All right, Bartholomew," said his wife, and she hurried on hardly knowing whether she were in a dream, or not. But when she got to the house of death everything was real enough.

The strange doctor was still there watching the sleep he had put the little patient into, and Mrs. Alcock was there, sitting beside the dead woman till Mr. Morrell should send the undertaker.

Nevin went from his dead wife to his daughter, hardly knowing there were others in the room, only when he said to the doctor:

"You are sure it will not hurt her to remove her to-night? But I can't let her stay here."

"It will not hurt her to remove her to-night," the doctor replied, "but she will need the greatest care afterward."

Nevin went again to his dead wife and stood looking down at her. Death had smoothed every wrinkle, and left the face much younger looking, while the tired, sad expression that used to give so much uneasiness to Nanny had quite gone, leaving in its place one of perfect rest and peace. Once more he was overcome by his grief, and he threw himself on his knees beside the remains, and sobbed as a child might have done. Kind hearted Mrs. Alcock cried with him.

"Oh, Mary!" he said, "I had so much, and you were in want; but *they* did it; *they* did it."

When Mrs. Morrell entered he took her by both hands.

"I know a little of what you have done for my

wife and child," he said, and then, as if his feelings would not let him say more, he turned away, while Mrs. Morrell went to take an affectionate look of her dead friend.

Nanny began to speak as if she were dreaming: at first no one could make out what she said, but after a little her words became quite distinct.

"Yes, mamma; I understand you. You said Mr. Morrell might come back with some one, and that would be my father. You wouldn't tell me his name for fear he wouldn't come, and if my father comes I am to love him—I'll love him, mamma, because you want me to—but you're dying mamma,"—beginning to speak wildly—"your face is cold—you don't see me—oh, mamma!" and then she screamed as she did when Nevin had stopped at the door before going in.

Nevin covered his face with his hands, and he shook with the grief he was trying to restrain. The doctor put his hand kindly on his shoulder and said:

"Do not mind this so much; it is only the reaction. I shall give her another opiate, and when she wakes I think she can be moved. It will be well to get her away from here as soon as possible."

A sudden thought came to Nevin, and calling Mrs. Morrell aside, he said:

"You have been to my house; you know how large it is—can not you and your husband, and your niece come there to live for the present? No member of my family shall disturb you, and I think it would help Nanny to have her friends with her. They will all be strangers to her in my house—even I, her father, am a stranger to her."

The tone of his last words brought fresh tears to Mrs. Morrell's eyes.

Nevin's proposal was accepted for Nanny's sake, Bartholomew being won to it when he came back with Lizzie, and it was arranged that Lizzie should go with Nanny that very night. Mr. and Mrs. Mor-

rell would follow when the body of Mrs. Tavish went.

But when Nanny came back to the knowledge of what was going on about her, not all the passionate tenderness of her newly found father could lessen her sense of loss ; and when she heard that she was to go away from the beloved corpse, she dropped on her knees beside it, and refused to leave it.

“ But mamma is going to,” said Nevin. Besides, didn’t mamma tell you to love and obey me ?”

She was on her feet at once.

“ I forgot she had told me that,” she said, “ yes I’ll go with you. Good bye, mamma, for a little while.”

And pressing on the cold, still face one of the long tender kisses she used to give it in life, she turned without a word to her father’s arms again.

They went in the hired carriage that still waited, Nanny resting on her father’s breast too tired and weak to speak, but feeling in spite of it all, in the tenderness of that embrace a great rest and comfort.

Lizzie of course had heard from her uncle much more of the strange story than he had told to his wife, there being more opportunity to tell her, and she was so divided between astonishment that Mr. Nevin should be Nanny’s father, sorrow at the death of Nanny’s mother, and joy that her little friend should have such a father, that she had abundant thoughts to keep her silent.

Old Mr. Ingoldsby had a stroke of paralysis, the physician said, and if it did not kill him, it would make him an imbecile for the rest of his life. He did not know anybody about him, not even Cornelia, who hung over him in silent grief and alarm refusing to believe the worst till one or both of her brothers should come. No one knew what business had called Egbert out, further than one of the servants had seen him go away in a great hurry with a stranger.

Edwin came in first, and he saw that the physician's opinion was probably correct, but he immediately ordered a consultation of doctors, and Cornelia took a little hope from that. But why did not Egbert come? she seemed to need him in this awful suspense, more than she had ever done in her life before. There was such a mystery surrounding her father's attack, Mat having told how he found him groping the hall.

Egbert came at length, and his coming caused almost as much excitement as his father's attack had done, the servants not knowing what to make of the fact that he carried a little girl tenderly in his arms, while another little girl walked beside him, and that he began to give peremptory orders before any one could tell him about Mr. Ingoldsby.

One of the servants, however, stepped up to him, and told him in a whisper what had happened.

A shade passed over his face, and he called for Margaret Anthon. She came to him at once, being already near, for she had heard the bustle made by his coming and she thought she might be wanted.

He whispered to her:

"If my sister can leave her father tell her to come to my room."

Margaret was startled recognizing not alone Lizzie Morrell who smiled at her, but the little girl in Nev-in's arms; her first thought was that through the Morrells perhaps the case had been brought to her master's notice, and he as usual had not been satisfied with any half measure of help. But if that were so, where was the mother, the mysterious sick woman who had excited Margaret's pity the Sunday before? Nor had Margaret now, any opportunity to show that she had ever seen Nanny, for the child too weak to bear the glare of the light and the bustle about her, kept her eyes closed and her face partly turned to her father's breast.

But Margaret showed none of her thoughts, and

even when she called Miss Ingoldsby from the room where her father lay, watched by his son and three physicians, she whispered her message quietly.

The message surprised and troubled Miss Ingoldsby—it was unlike Egbert not to come to her at such a time as this, but without betraying any of her feelings she went at once to his room. He, himself, opened to her knock, but instead of inviting her in, he went out into the hall shutting the door behind him, and drawing her a little way from it. He looked so strangely that she was frightened. Was she to hear of another calamity? and she waited in a sort of horror stricken silence for him to speak; her own tongue would not move. He put his arm about her and kissed her.

“I have just come from my dead wife, and I have brought my little daughter home. Come and see her.”

He turned to go back to the room, and she followed like one in a nightmare. Within, he led her to the bed. Lizzie Morrell sat beside it; and on it Nanny was lying. She saw them coming and she sat up.

“Nanny Tavish!” Miss Ingoldsby fairly screamed, and stopping short in her walk to the bed,

“Is Nanny Tavish your child, Egbert?” and she turned wildly to her brother.

“My child, Cornelia, my very own,” he said, gently urging her forward again, “and you must love her as you love me.”

Cornelia needed not that bidding, nor did she need the smile of the little pale creature on the bed to make her fold the child to her as closely as Nevin himself had done. She strained Nanny to her and kissed her again and again.

“I always felt there was *something*,” she said, “something about you, Nanny, that made me want Egbert to see you. But how is it? how has it happened? why was I never told before? I don’t understand—” turning to her brother, and then seeing

Lizzie for the first time, "and how is it this little girl is here, too?"

Nevin answered :

"There is a good deal to explain to you, Cornelia, but not now. Try and bear the mystery for a little, and help me to make up as far as I may, the wrong which has been done."

Then he told her quickly of his arrangements for the funeral, and his plan for the Morrells.

"The house is so large, thank Providence, they can all live here easily without ever seeing the members of our family. They can have their own suite of rooms, and their own servants. I have already given orders and the servants are preparing for them. My daughter and her little friend shall stay with me till we have had some refreshments ; then Margaret Anthon will take charge of them for the present. She already knows Lizzie here, and for my sake, she will take tender care of my fragile little girl."

And he sat on the bed beside Nanny and put his arm about her.

Cornelia burst into tears.

"Oh, Egbert ! I ought to do my part in staying with your little one, but my father—" she could say no more.

Egbert put his other arm about her and drew her to him.

"No, Cornelia ; your first duty is to your father. Go to him and stay with him, I shall go to him also, after a little. But Edwin, his own son is with him now, and *my* first duty at present, is here," pressing Nanny to him.

The name of Edwin brought to the tearful girl many fears and anxieties. What would he say when he found that all his care to keep from Egbert a knowledge of Nanny Tavish was useless ; what would he *do* when he heard that she was in the house the acknowledged child of his half-brother ?

Why had both he and his father kept from her, Cornelia, all knowledge of Egbert's marriage? Why had Egbert himself been so silent about it? Must she now on going back to her father's room tell Edwin what had happened, and bear another distressing scene? She looked appealingly at Egbert.

"I cannot be the bearer of this news to Edwin."

"I did not mean that you should be," said Nevin, "I shall tell him at the proper time. From some of the servants, probably, he will learn enough to make him curious, and should he say anything to you, tell him to come to me for information. Now, go, Cornelia, and I shall join you, after a little."

She kissed Nanny, and then seeing Lizzie's big black eyes fixed wistfully upon her, she kissed her also.

Nevin had sent for a doctor whom he knew, and he was waiting to hear his opinion about Nanny, before giving her and her little friend to the care of Margaret. The little girls were to have one of the elegant guest chambers on the other side of the hall from his own room, while Margaret was to be within call in a room that adjoined the guest chamber.

When the doctor arrived he said a long, sound sleep would do the little patient more good than anything else, and he prescribed a powder for this purpose. Margaret put Nanny to bed with Lizzie nestling beside her, and then she kissed them both, placed a little night-lamp and a tiny hand bell on a stand near Lizzie, so that she might ring if anything were wanted, and she went out.

The shadows that the night lamp made caused Nanny to think of the shadows which had seemed to hang so strangely about her dying mother, and that had made her so much afraid. But the present shadows were not in the midst of poverty and want, but amid such comfort and elegance as Nanny had never seen before. The strangeness of it all seemed to make her little mind more active than it had ever

been : before this she had been too weak and too full of the death of her mother even to wonder much how Mr. Nevin had come to be her father ; why her mother had never told her, why he had never come to see them before, when he was so kind and loving now ? but, as she lay there waiting for the sleep the powder was to bring, the thoughts crowded upon her in a painful way. She seemed to live over again the meeting she had that evening with Miss Ingoldsby, and as she remembered how the young lady called Mr. Nevin, Egbert, all the fancies she once had on hearing that name came back. How wonderful it was that *he* should actually be her father. It made her thrill from head to foot. Everything came back to her ; her first visit to Staten Island when Miss Ingoldsby said she looked like Egbert ; her mother's unwillingness to talk much about the family ; her own discontent with their poor little home when they returned from Staten Island. Now, her poor home had been changed to a grand one, but her darling mother had been taken. She would give all, the elegant home, her father kind and good and loving as he seemed to be, for one more day with her mother : but to feel that nowhere in this world could she see her, only the cold, stark body lying in the poor little home wrung from her a cry that brought Margaret to the bedside.

Lizzie's arms were round Nanny at once, and she was saying as the woman came in.

“What is it, Nanny ?”

“Oh, Lizzie ! my mother ! my darling mother !”

CHAPTER XLV.

WHEN Mrs. Nevin a rich young widow married Mr. Ingoldsby, a great many people were surprised ; he was poor, years older than she was, and she had not known him long ; then she was the mother of a bright handsome boy thirteen years old, and some folks said it was unkind to give him a step-father. And the boy himself was so angry about it, that his mother sent him away to school. Nor did he ever get to like his step-father, for as he grew older, and came home to spend his vacations, he saw more and more how Mr. Ingoldsby cared for nothing but to show off in society with his wife's money, and to boast of his "blue blood."

When a little baby half-brother was born, Egbert's feelings even to his step-father seemed to soften, and four years after, when a little step-sister came, his whole heart went out to her, and when she was two years old and his mother died, he felt, being twenty-one years old, as if he were more father than brother to both her and Edwin who was then six years of age. Egbert Nevin was very rich, having all the property left by his own father ; to his step-father, Egbert's mother had left the whole of her own fortune, but the way Mr. Ingoldsby spent money, it did not seem likely to last very long. Mr. Ingoldsby however, did not appear to think of that ; he was sure his step-son would help him if he became poor, and he was quite sure that if Egbert should die first, and that he were not married, he would leave all his

riches to Cornelia and Edwin. He was very angry that Egbert hated society so much, but he hid his anger, and he made believe to laugh in a good natured way at Egbert's queer tastes, in always taking for his friends men much older than himself and who were more fond of books than of society.

When Cornelia was eight years old, and her brother twelve, Egbert's health became poor, and he went to the South. In Savannah he met Captain Willow, one of his step-father's friends. The Captain took the young man to Cockspur Island where he himself lived with a widowed sister.

The island was a lonely place, full of wild southern grass, and it had no houses except the Captain's, and a few cabins where the Captain's negro slaves lived. The shores of the island were low, and on bright days alligators came up to them from the water to play in the sun. In Captain Willow's family lived Mary Denton, a seamstress, who was also a companion to the Captain's sister. She was more than thirty years old, not good looking, and very plainly educated, but she was very modest and gentle and kind. In the families she had worked for in Savannah, many a poor slave had a chance of knowing how kind she was. She was so discreet about her own business, that no one knew more of her than that she had come to the South eight years before, with some cousins; that all were taken down with Georgia fever, and that only she recovered.

Being but a seamstress, she was not introduced to Captain Willow's guest, and when she chanced to meet him she did not raise her eyes to look at him; nor did he think at all about her, only to notice when he once heard her speak, her low, gentle voice.

The guest liked his life on the island; it was so lonely and secluded, and the Captain and his sister were delighted to have him; then there was no need for him to go home for some time. Cornelia and

Edwin had teachers in the house, and their father was happy "living for society."

One afternoon, in Egbert's walk about the island, he heard cries of pain coming from one of the cabins. He looked in and saw Mary Denton holding in her arms a sick negro woman.

On the next day the slave woman was dead, two of the other negroes were sick in the same way, and it seemed likely that everybody on the island would catch the sickness. Captain Willow and his sister much frightened, got ready to leave the island at once, feeling sure their guest would go with them. As soon as they reached Savannah they would send proper help to the sufferers and as Mary Denton was already in danger of taking the disease from nursing the sick people, they could not bring her with them, even if she were willing to go. What was their surprise to find that Nevin would not leave the island.

"My dear young sir," said Captain Willow when he had said everything he could think of to make the young man change his determination, "if you stay you will cause people to talk about that young woman. She is very much respected in Savannah now, but when society hears she has been alone on the island with you, even though it were to nurse a handful of negroes, her good name will be hurt."

"Then if we both live, I shall marry her," said Nevin with a grind of his teeth at the thought of society.

The Captain was aghast, and as soon as he got to Savannah, he wrote a full account to Mr. Ingoldsby. Mr. Ingoldsby wrote back, begging his friend to do everything he could to prevent such a terrible marriage. But the Captain was not able to stop it. Neither Mr. Nevin, nor Mary Denton caught the sickness, and they nursed the poor blacks so well, that four out of six recovered. Then Nevin married Mary Denton, not however, without having to listen

first to her fears that he might afterward be sorry for doing so, as she was nine years older than he was, and not at all his equal in education and breeding. She was afraid too that he wanted to marry her more because of his own noble feelings, than because he really loved her. They went to another part of Georgia to live, so that Nevin could still have the benefit of the southern air, and also have time to get his wife ready for an introduction to his family. She loved him dearly, and he treated her tenderly, but in spite of it all she could not help thinking he had married her from pity, and to save her good name. More and more each day she felt how far below him she was in learning and refined manners, and she began to fancy that her husband was not happy.

Nevin in his letters home did not say a word of his marriage, nor did he know, nor care whether Captain Willow had done so. The Captain had written, calling it a very "low marriage," and old Mr. Ingoldsby was furious, but he could do nothing to help himself further than to write to his friend to keep a strict watch on the married couple, and that since it was such a *low* marriage, after a little perhaps his stepson would leave his wife.

When eight months had passed business about his property made it necessary for Egbert to go to New York, but his wife was not well enough to accompany him.

He intended to return in three weeks, and leaving his wife well supplied with money, he went cheerfully with no thought of future trouble or separation. He became ill in New York, and for three months he never left his bed. His step-father was thus enabled to open every one of the letters that came from the frantic wife, now also a mother, and to answer them as he thought best. These answers were very cold and cruel and confirmed all the poor creature's fears.

At last a letter arrived asking the mother to give

up her child. Her husband confessed he could not live with her, but the infant should be well brought up and faithfully provided for—Mr. Ingoldsby intended to consign it to an orphan asylum. The mother replied as follows :

“I give up every claim upon you, Egbert ; I no longer want to see you. I am going away, and I shall take every means in my power to keep you from ever hearing of me again.

“ MARY DENTON.”

She would not even take his name to show him all the more how entirely she gave him up. Then she fled to a large city in the West, adopting the name of Tavish, and passing for a widow.

Her husband was not well enough to read that letter for a month after it had been written. Then, his step-father gave it to him with all the others, saying :

“I took the right of relationship to open them when the doctors said you might never get back your memory. Had I known that you would recover I should not have done so.”

Nevin did not speak till he had read them all ; then he said quietly :

“Did you also take the right of our relationship to answer these letters ?”

“No ;” with a steady look.

“Why did you not answer them ?” asked Nevin in the same strangely quiet way, “why did you not tell her, my wife, that I was sick, unable to write ; and not let it get to this ?” holding up the last short letter.

Mr. Ingoldsby did not speak, nor did Nevin say any more ; he only turned his face away from his step-father and set his lips together in a manner that showed he had made up his mind very sternly to something. As soon as possible he went back to the

South to search for his wife, but it was no use. His step-father lived in constant fear lest she should be found ; that of course would make known what *he* had done, but as the years went by he began to feel more and more sure that nothing ever would be heard of *her*.

Nevin never spoke of his marriage to any one ; it gave him too much pain. He blamed his step-father for the loss of his wife and child, and were it not that this man was the father of Cornelia he could not have borne his presence ; but for her sake he forced himself to be respectful and even kind beyond Mr. Ingoldsby's expectations. For Edwin, as the boy grew, Nevin did not care so much ; he resembled his father too closely.

Egbert made a second visit to the South in search of his wife, but he had to go back with the same hungry, aching heart as before. He used to look longingly at little girls about the age his own daughter must be if she were alive, and more at poor little girls than any others, because he felt *his* little girl must be poor, perhaps very poor.

When Egbert returned to New York from that second visit he found his family in a fine house up town, most of the old servants gone, among them Margaret Anthon. Edwin finishing his studies at college, and Cornelia being educated so as to be able to go into society. His step-father was in high spirits having made some good investments. For two years Egbert remained home then, overseeing Cornelia's studies and taking every possible care of her. In doing this, and in enjoying her affection for him which was as much like a daughter's as a sister's, he did not feel quite so sad.

At the end of the two years Edwin returned and this put an end to all peace and enjoyment. In disappointment and disgust Egbert went away again, this time to Europe, remaining a year, and writing alone to Cornelia.

After a while Mr. Ingoldsby's investments began to fail ; he was compelled to live in a cheaper manner, or ask help from his step-son. It would be very hard to do the latter as both he and Edwin had shown so little care for Egbert's wishes ; so, they made up their minds to sell the fine house and board till Mr. Ingoldsby should have better luck. While they were boarding Mrs. Tavish chanced to get the washing of the family to do.

Mrs. Tavish knew that the name of her husband's relatives was Ingoldsby, but she did not know much more, for Nevin had thought it best to say very little about them, and though the name at first made her start, she neither heard, nor saw anything to lead her to think they could be other than entire strangers to her husband. But the first time she went to Staten Island when Miss Ingoldsby said the name of Egbert, she understood all, and then her heart received its first shock. Her only fear was that the man who had been so cruel to her would separate her from her child.

CHAPTER XLVI.

MRS. NEVIN was buried from her husband's fine home ; she who was so poor almost her whole life long had an abundance of rich things about her when she lay in her beautiful casket. Those who saw her for the first time there, thought she must have been a handsome woman, and not as old as she really was.

Her husband would have no sad looking shroud about her, but a robe of the purest white silk, and the most fragrant flowers, and when he took Nanny to the parlor to see her, her tears gave way all at once to a look of pleasure. It seemed as if in her bright surroundings her mother smiled at her, and the pink hue of some of the buds resting against her face, took away from the features the look of death.

"My own darling precious mamma !" sobbed Nanny, and then pressing her lips close to the dead face, she whispered :

"I don't understand yet, mamma, how it is that Mr. Nevin is my father, but he is very kind and I promised you to love and obey him. I love him already because he loves you, so it won't be hard to obey him. But don't forget your little Nanny, in Heaven mamma ; ask God to make me as good as you want me to be."

"Nanny," called her father, uneasy at her long, close clasp of the dead. She lifted her head at once, and reading in his sorrowful face all the signs of a love as tender as her mother had given her, she

sprang to his arms, nestled her head in his breast, and whispered with a sob :

“ If I did not have you to love me, papa, my heart would break.”

Mrs. Morrell said the corpse looked more like an angel, and then she added to Margaret Anthon :

“ But she was an angel, in patience and goodness when she was alive,” Margaret thought so too, recollecting how she had felt drawn to the ‘strange woman she had helped into the house just a week ago.

And what a house it was now for wonder and excitement among the servants when they were told that one of the little girls Nevin had brought home with him was his daughter, that the dead woman was his wife, and that Mrs. Morrell who had behaved so ignorantly at the party, was coming to live there.

They all came, Bartholomew, Maria, Lizzie, and the parrot, after the funeral, Mrs. Morrell having carefully locked her old apartments, and given the key to a neighbor to air them sometimes. Nevin had given them a whole floor of elegant rooms ; one of which was made into a dining room where they had their meals all to themselves. Everything was so fine Mrs. Morrell used to ask her husband to pinch her so that she might be sure she was not dreaming.

The chairs were too elegant to sit on, she said, and her feet sank so far into the carpet she used to put her hand down to see what sort of “soft stuff” was in it, while for the other furniture, it was so fine she had no words to describe it. Then, during meals when she had “a man at her back,” as she said, to do everything but just put the food into her mouth, it beat all the fairy tales ever were read.

Bartholomew took it all quietly enough, thinking more of the story of the dead woman than of his own changed surroundings, but when he saw his wife so very much delighted, and when he heard her wishing Mrs. Blun could behold her now, he thought it

his duty to check her a little, and he said gently :

“Don’t let yourself be set up, Maria, by any attention that’s shown us now ; think of the poor, dead creature that had none of it, and it her right.”

Nevin found the letters to his wife that his step-father had forged. Strangely enough, Mrs. Tavish had not thought to tell Mr. Morrell that she had kept those letters, but they had been found in a tin box in the closet, when Mrs. Morrell was looking over the contents of the room, in order to take to Nanny such articles as the child might prize for her mother’s sake. In that way the tin box where the letters were, and even Nanny’s own little portfolio containing her sketches and rhymes, were given to her father. Mr. Nevin read them all, his heart swelling with indignation against his step-father, and only that Mr. Ingoldsby was lying on his death bed, he would have confronted him with these proofs of his treachery.

The sketches and rhymes of his daughter he read with moist eyes ; they told so much of her bright and ardent nature.

After the funeral Egbert went to his brother. He spread the forged letters of his father before him.

“I neither know, nor care,” said he, “whether you were ever told that these letters were written, but I do know that you tried as much as your father did, to keep from me all knowledge of the child you were afraid might be my own. Were your father not ill as he is, I could not answer for what I might say to him. To you, I say, that you have acted ungratefully to me, and like a brute to your sister. Till your father’s health is better I shall consider him my charge, and I shall permit you to stay here to wait on him. When he recovers I shall provide for him, and I shall give to you enough money to support you till you take up some business. That is all.”

Two days after that talk, Nevin was freed from

doing anything more for his step-father—old Mr. Ingoldsby died without knowing anybody, and without uttering a word.

When the funeral was over Edwin went away in angry haste, refusing Cornelia's hand, and flinging into Nevin's face, the cheque he had drawn for him. But, for all that, Nevin found means to send the cheque after Edwin, as Edwin in his own heart felt that he would do, and the young man did not disdain then to receive it and to use it.

CHAPTER XLVII.

It was some time before Nanny Nevin recovered strength or spirits enough to enjoy her new home. What she liked best of all, was her father's love for her. When he was away from her, which was not often, she used to close her eyes and picture him and her mother together.

Cornelia, now that she could give without any fear the love Nanny so easily won, made up by her tenderness for every pain she had inflicted in the past, and then Nanny had Lizzie constantly with her. But she liked best of all to lie upon her father's breast, and tell him about her mother. In that way Nevin learned the depths of his poor wife's suffering, and her ardent affection for her child, and if, during the eight months of their wedded life, there had been times when Nevin regretted his wife's want of learning, there was never a moment now, that he did not feel that no amount of learning could be equal to her noble life of love and goodness.

Mr. Morrell after two weeks in Mr. Nevin's house, thought it time to go back to his own, not a little to his wife's disgust, when the master of the house was so anxious to have them stay. But Bartholomew said in his quiet way.

"There aint no need of us staying longer, Maria; Nanny's getting along, and Lizzie will stay here. We must not impose on kindness that's given to us out of gratitude." But when he told Mr. Nevin he was going, that gentleman said at once ;

“I could not hear of it, Mr. Morrell, because it would upset all my plans. I mean, as soon as Nanny is well enough, to take her to Europe for a few months, and if you will trust her to me, Lizzie also; my sister will go with us, and while we are gone I want you and your good wife to take charge of the house and servants. Margaret Anthon, I think will be a great help to Mrs. Morrell. So give up your old rooms, and do not think of going into business for another year,” saying the last words with a smile that made Mr. Morrell smile also. However, he consented to Mr. Nevin’s proposal to remain, though he was not so sure about letting Lizzie go to Europe—Europe was a great way off, and how could he bear the parting? But he would not say anything about his own feelings yet, lest it would be selfish.

When Mrs. Morrell was told of the plan, the part that pleased her most was the proffer to remain in her grand home, and in her delight she sat down on the very softest chair, and placed her feet firmly in the downy carpet.

“I couldn’t get quite used to all this grandeur before,” she said by way of explanation, “but now that I’m going to stay in it awhile, I’ll just make myself at home.”

“Maria,” said her husband gravely, “don’t let your human nature be set up. Be thankful, Maria, but be humble.”

Nevin did not trouble himself about what society said; of course society was aghast that he should take such low people into his house, and let their daughter be like a twin sister of his own child. Had he been willing to receive the fair, fashionable ladies, many of them would have overlooked the fact that his own daughter had a lowly born mother but since he still politely refused their advances, they declared that they must cut the whole family, even Cornelia. And then they managed to revive

the old rumors of his low marriage in the South, and to say that the ridiculous party he had given was in keeping with his odd, disagreeable character. None of them knew the true cause of the separation of husband and wife; Nevin never told it so as to spare the memory of his step-father; not even to Cornelia did he tell about the forged letters—all but the facts relating to them, she knew.

Edwin told his friends very briefly that his step-brother had made a low marriage eleven years before, by some means—he was careful not to say what means—had become separated from his wife till just before her death, and that he, Edwin, had left his brother's house because he would not recognize the child of such a low woman.

In the home of the Bluns whither Mr. Blun himself was the first to bring the news, having heard it in the store from a customer, it caused amazement and dismay. Mr. Blun had every item, even down to the fact that the Morrells were living with Mr. Nevin, and he told it all with intense secret satisfaction; it was so sweet a revenge on his wife. His wife sat looking at him as if she thought he had gone crazy. Miss Luxor was sincerely delighted.

“That poor widow, as I thought she was, and her daughter,” she said; “I was very much interested in them when I went to see them. Are you not sorry?” turning to Helen, “that you did not go with me to visit them, that time?”

Helen was looking blank from astonishment, envy, and vexation. Perhaps her greatest pain came from the fact that Lizzie Morrell was made so much of.

Mrs. Blun was ready to cry when she heard all this wonderful news; if only, she had not treated the poor washerwoman as she had done, or if she had been civil to Mrs. Morrell at the party—Mr. Blun felt as he looked at his wife that he had had all the satisfaction he wanted.

Nanny in talking about her life to her father,

could not very well keep back the part that Helen Blun had played in it, though she tried to do so, thinking it would please her mother to say nothing but kind things of every one ; but when she stopped and tried to change the subject, Lizzie who was often present at these conversations, used to come back to Helen and tell what Nanny would have left untold.

Then Mr. Nevin explained to them both that Helen was more to be pitied, and that her faults were due to a want of proper home training ; he even made them both laugh by his description of Helen as she looked the first time he saw her with the ridiculous bonnet on. And somehow, he always made Lizzie feel more kindly to Helen ; as for Nanny, with her heart so full of the teachings of her dead mother, and her life so rich with love, she had no thought save one of kindness for everybody.

In Nanny's old school her wonderful good fortune was known the day after her mother's death ; indeed, the whole neighborhood was so full of it, that it would have been strange had not the school children heard it ; from them, the teachers got it ; but Miss Olden had more direct news, having gone to the house in time to see the removal of Mrs. Nevin's remains, and to hear an account from Mrs. Morrell, and Miss Olden told it all to her companions during the noon recess. Of course, Miss Robson heard it also, and she had to bear not a few curious looks ; most of the teachers wondering what she thought of Nanny Tavish now, and whether she did not regret her treatment of the child. But Miss Robson did not seem to mind, holding herself up very stiffly, and saying, when Miss Olden had finished amid a chorus of :

" Oh ! " " Isn't it wonderful ? " " I never read anything like it. "

" I always take such tales with a good deal of reservation ; the narrator's imagination is so apt to

embellish," and then she went out of the room so as to hear nothing more.

But, she had to acknowledge it was no embellishment of the narrator's imagination when three weeks later, Miss Olden showed a note she had received from Mr. Nevin asking her to call and see Nanny, and thanking her for her kindness to Nanny while in her class, and for her kind visit to Nanny's mother.

Miss Robson turned white with jealousy and anger, and when the day after, she herself received a note from Mr. Nevin, accompanying Lizzie Morrell's books, a note which merely told her that Lizzie had left the school and which note did not even hint at a wish to have *her* call to see Nanny, Miss Robson's secret rage was very great.

And when Miss Olden after her visit to the Nevins, described to the teachers the grandeur of the house, her own friendly reception, and her cordial invitation to come again, Miss Robson's angry, envious feelings made her almost ill.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

MR. MORRELL, like the good man he was, when he thought of all that would come to his niece from a trip to Europe, said she should go, and he bravely hid his own feelings about having her away from him. Could Lizzie have taken her uncle with her, her delight would have known no bounds, but to be gone from him for six months seemed cruel. It took endless assurances from him that, now being so well provided for, and his health so good, he would get along quite well, and that he would hardly feel the six months passing.

Mrs. Morrell was the happiest woman in the whole city, she said herself: indeed, she was constantly in such spirits, that her husband had to tell her very often not to let her human nature be set up; to "be thankful, but be humble."

When Mrs. Morrell made her last visit to her old tenement house home, dressed in the black silk that still looked handsome though she had worn it a great deal lately to be in keeping with her elegant surroundings, and when she found herself a sort of queen among her neighbors, she felt as if there were nothing to be added to her happiness. Even Mrs. Tappan was willing to forgive the old offence, leaving her apartments to make one of the circle of neighbors who crowded about Mrs. Morrell to listen to her wonderful accounts, and to tell her how glad they were of her good fortune.

Of course Mrs. Morrell paid a visit to the under-

taker's shop, bursting on poor forlorn looking Thimig in a way that nearly took his breath ; but, as Mr. Brush was in the shop also, it gave the boy time to recover himself. Mr. Brush shook hands with Mrs. Morrell and that was an opening for repeating everything she had told to the other neighbors. But the account made Thimig very sad ; it took Lizzie further and further from him, and when he heard she was going to Europe he burst out crying.

"Orlander !" said Mrs. Morrell, while Brush wondering, asked :

"What's the matter ?"

Thimig said still crying ; and digging his big fists into his eyes :

"I can't help it ; she was the light of my heart ; her eyes is a flashin' before me all the time, and now she's goin' away."

"Who ?" asked Brush puzzled.

"Lizzie ; Lizzie as has the eyes wot a fellow can't forget—oh—o—oh !"

"Oh, that's what's the matter, is it, ?" said Brush laughing, but Mrs. Morrell did not laugh, she actually put her arm around the boy's ungainly shoulders and said :

"Don't you cry Orlander ; when Lizzie comes back she'll come to see you, I won't let her forget you."

Thimig stopped crying, and taking the hand that rested on his shoulder pressed it to his bosom.

"Thank you, Mrs. Morrell ; you're a good woman ; once I called you a animal but I'm sorry now ; you aint no animal."

"That's all right, Orlander," said Mrs. Morrell, forgiving entirely in the happy state of her mind everything that was ever done, or said against her.

"Don't you think no more of it, and maybe when Lizzie comes back, and Bartholomew goes into business, and we're a living in rooms again, you'll come to see us."

And this prospect comforted Thimig very much.

Mr. Nevin would reward everybody who had been kind to his wife and child: in that way the humble Alocks got a present that enabled them to leave their basement home, and the other four families in the house got mementoes from Nevin in Nanny's name, and as the mementoes were fifty dollar gold pieces they were very nice and most acceptable.

For Miss Olden, Nevin wanted to do something more; and learning that she thought of making application for a higher position in a school then being built, and which was to open in September, but that she was afraid it would be hopeless to do so, as she had no influence, he told her to write her application and give it to him.

When Miss Olden told that in school Miss Robson sneered. Miss Robson also had made application for a higher position in that same new school, but then it was known *she* had friends who would work for her appointment.

"As for Mr. Nevin," Miss Robson said, "he is not connected in any way with the school; what influence can *he* have?"

"The influence of great wealth," replied one of the teachers, "and that influence often seems powerful enough to buy, or bribe anything under Heaven."

A speech which seemed prophetic, for it actually turned out that Nevin, because of his wealth was able to get influence enough to make his young friend Principal of the new school. On searching her record the educational committee found that she had seven years experience, an exceptionally good record except that of the last examination which truth had made Superintendent Jonas report had not been quite up to the mark, and an excellent character. So, Mr. Nevin was told the chances for his candidate were very good.

When Miss Robson heard that she was aghast, but still she would not believe that the principalship

could be secured for Miss Olden, nor did she believe it till the appointments were actually made; then, when she found that Miss Olden was really the Principal; while she herself had been appointed in the same school to a position only a grade higher than her present one, it made her so sick she stayed away from school two whole days.

In justice to Miss Olden we must say that while she was delighted, she did not forget to be humble and she received the congratulations of her fellow teachers with becoming modesty. That rigid disciplinarian, Miss Tibbetty, relaxed entirely her severity with Miss Olden during the remainder of the young lady's stay in the school, and Miss Amer on several occasions, gave her good advice as to the manner of properly fulfilling the duties of her new and exalted position.

CHAPTER XLIX.

MR. NEVIN had made up his mind to give another party ; but this time it was to be a party to which only the Blun family and Miss Olden were to be invited, and it was to take place a day or two before he and his two little charges started for Europe.

When Mrs. Morrell heard about the party and who were to be invited, it seemed to her as if she had attained a height of glory hardly possible in this world.

This party was not like the former one. Both Nevin and Cornelia made it full of simplicity and good humor, and enjoyment. Mr. Blun actually forgot his discipline, Mrs. Blun unconsciously gave up her airs, and she met Mrs. Morrell's cordial advances in a manner that banished every unpleasant trace of the past. Helen, at first shy and shame faced, was taken possession of by Nanny and Lizzie ; and they both vied with each other in treating her kindly and making her so happy, she could feel no longer either envious or jealous.

All the children went in a body to explore the beautiful house, but that which amused the twins most was Lizzie's parrot. It was as lively and as talkative as ever ; and when it said, on being asked by Susie to talk more :

"Go to bed," the twins roared with laughter.

Miss Luxor thought there never had been such a pleasant gathering. She was especially pleased with Mr. Morrell, and when the adieus were spoken with the promise of happy reunions on the return from

Europe, even Mrs. Blun felt there was truer enjoyment to be found in simplicity and kindness than in all the style of high society.

When Helen laid her head on her pillow that night it was with a happier heart than she had known for months. Miss Luxor after she had put the delighted children to bed, feeling impelled to go to Helen's room found her wide awake.

"Aunt Rebecca," she said, "come and kiss me, I am so happy."

And so the story is ended. But, in another book we shall take up the narrative, telling what happened to the travelers in Europe, resuming our acquaintance with the Morrells, and recounting the fortunes of the various members of the Blun family, not even forgetting poor, stupid Oleander Thimig.

South Woodbury, Vt.
1890.

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